AN ESSAY

ON THE EVILS OF

POPULAR IGNORANCE,

AND

A DISCOURSE ON THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA.

BY

JOHN FOSTER.

"A Work, which, popular and admired as it confessedly
'is, has never met with the thousandth part of the atten-
"tion which it deserves. It appears to me that we are now
"at a crisis in the state of our country, and of the world,
"which renders the reasonings and exhortations of that
"eloquent production applicable and urgent beyond all
"power of mine to express."—DR. J. PYE SMITH.

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OF

POPULAR IGNORANCE:

AND

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

COMMUNICATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE PEOPLE OF HINDOOSTAN.

By JOHN FOSTER.

NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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ADVERTISEMENT

If the circumstance of a manner of introduction somewhat different from what would be expected in a composition of the essay class were worth a very few words of explanation, it might be mentioned, that the following production has grown out of the topics of a discourse, delivered at a public anniversary meeting in aid of the British and Foreign School Society.

When it was thought, a good while after that occasion, that a more extensive use might be made of some of the observations, the writing was begun in the form of a Discourse addressed to an assembly, and commencing with a sentence from the Bible, to serve as a general indication to the subject. But after some progress had been made, it became evident that any thing like a comprehensive view of that subject would be incompatible with the proper limits of such a composition.

In relinquishing, however, the form of a public address, the writer thought he might be excused for leaving some traces of that character to remain, in both the cast of expression and the theological sentiment; for reverting repeatedly to the sentence from Scripture;

and for continuing the use of the plural pronoun, so commodious for the modest egotism of public discoursers.

In the general design and course of observations, the essay retains the character of the original discourse, which was, in accordance to the presumed expectations of a grave assembly, an attempt to display the importance of the education of the people in reference, mainly, to moral and religious interests. There are special relations in which their ignorance or cultivation are of great consequence to the welfare of the community. Some of these are of indispensable consideration to the legislator, and to the political economist. But it is in that general and moral view, in which ignorance in the lower orders is beheld the cause of their vice, irreligion, and consequent misery, that the subject is attempted, imperfectly and somewhat desultorily, to be illustrated in the following pages.

Nor was it within the writer's design to suggest any particular plans, regulations, or instrumental expedients, in promotion of the system of operations hopefully begun, for raising these classes from their degradation. His part has been to make such a prominent representation of the calamitous effects of their ignorance, as shall prove it an aggravated national guilt to allow another generation to grow up to the same condition as the present and the past. In the course of attempting this, occasions have been seized of exposing the absurdity of those who are hostile to the mental improvement of the people. If any one should say that this

is a mere beating of the air, for that all such hostility is now gone by, he may be assured there are many persons, of no insignificant rank in society, who would from their own consciousness smile at the simplicity with which he can so easily shape men's opinions and dispositions to his mind whether they will or not. He must have been the most charitable or the most obtuse of observers.

It is feared the readers of the following essay will find some defect of distribution and arrangement. To the candour of those who are practised in literary work it would be an admissible plea, that when, in a preparation to meet a particular occasion for which but little time has been allowed, a series of topics and observations has been hastily sketched out, it is far from easy to throw them afterwards into a different order. The author has to bespeak indulgence also, here and there, to something too like repetition. If he qualifies the terms in which this fault is acknowledged, it is because he thinks that, though there be a recurrence of similarities, a mere bare iteration is avoided, by means of a diversity and addition of the matter of illustration and enforcement.

Any benevolent writer on the subject would wish he could treat it without such frequent use of the phrases, "lower orders," "subordinate classes," "inferior portion of society," and other expressions of the same kind; because they have an invidious sound, and have indeed very often been used in contempt. He can only say, that he uses them with no such feeling; that they

are employed simply as the most obvious terms of designation; and that he would like better to employ any less ungracious ones that did not require an affected circumlocution.

In several parts of the essay, there will be found a language of emphatic censure on that conduct of states, that predominant spirit and system in the administration of the affairs of nations, by which the people have been consigned to such a deplorable condition of intellectual and consequently moral degradation, while resources approaching to immensity have been lavished on objects of vanity and ambition. So far from feeling that such observations can require any apology, the writer thinks it is high time for all the advocates of intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, to raise a protesting voice against that policy of the states denominated Christian, and especially our own, which has, through age after age, found every conceivable thing necessary to be done, at all costs and hazards, rather than to enlighten, reform, and refine the people. He thinks that nothing can more strongly betray a judgment enslaved, or a time-serving dishonesty, in those who would assume to dictate to such an advocate and to censure him, than that sort of doctrine which tells him that it is beside his business, and out of his sphere, as a Christian moralist, to animadvert on the conduct of national authorities, when he sees them, during one long period of time after another, not doing that which is the most important of all things to be done for the people over whom they preside, but doing what is in substance and

effect the reverse; and doing it on that great scale, which contrasts so fearfully with the small one, on which the individuals who deplore such perversion of power are confined to attempt a remedy of the consequences.

This interdiction comes with its worst appearance, when it is put forth in terms affecting a profound reverence of religion; a reverence which cannot endure that so holy a thing should be defiled, by being brought in any contact with such a subject as the disastrous effect of bad government, on the intellectual and moral state of the people. The advocate of schemes for the improvement of their rational nature *may*, it seems, take his ground, his strongest ground, on religion, for enforcing on *individuals* the duty of promoting such an object. In the name and authority of religion he may press on their consciences with respect to the application of their property and influence; and he may adopt under its sanction a strongly judicial language in censure of their negligence, their insensibility to their accountableness, and their lavish expenditures foreign to the most important uses: in all this he does well. But the instant he begins to make the like judicial application of its laws to the public conduct of the governing authorities, that instant he debases Christianity to politics, most likely to party-politics; and a pious horror is affected at the profanation. Christianity is to be honoured somewhat after the same manner as the Lama of Thibet. It is to stay in its temple, to have the proprieties of homage duly preserved within

its precincts, but to be *exempted* (in reverence of its sanctity!) from all cognizance of great public affairs, even in the points where they most interfere with or involve its interests. It could show, perhaps, in what manner the administration of those affairs injures these interests; but it would degrade its sacred character by talking of any such matter. But Christianity must have leave to decline the sinister compliment of such pretended anxiety to preserve it immaculate. As to its sacred character, it can *venture that*, on the strength of its intrinsic quality and of its own guardianship, while, regardless of the limits thus attempted in mock reverence to be prescribed, it steps in a censorial capacity on what will be called a political ground, so far as to take account of what concern has been shown, or what means have been left disposable, for operations to promote the grand essentials of human welfare, by that public system which has grasped and expended the strength of the community. Christianity is not so demure a thing that it cannot, without violating its consecrated character, go into the exercise of this judicial office. And as to its *right* to do so,—either it has a right to take cognizance now of the manner in which the spirit and measures of states and their regulators bear upon the most momentous interests, or it will have no right to be brought forward as the supreme law for the final award on those proceedings and those men.*

* A censure on this alleged desecration of religious topics, which had been pronounced on the Essay (first edit.) by a Review making no small pretensions both religious and literary, was the immediate

It is now more than twenty years since a national plan of education for the inferior classes, was brought forward by Mr. (now Lord) Brougham. The announcement of such a scheme from such an Author, was received with hope and delight by those who had so long deplored the condition of those classes. But when it was formally set forth, its administrative organization appeared so defective in liberal comprehension, so invidiously restricted and accommodated to the prejudices and demands of one part of the community, that another great division, the one in which zeal and exertions for the education of the people had been more and longer conspicuous, was constrained to make an instant and general protest against it. And at the same time it was understood, that the party in whose favour it had been so inequitably constructed, were displeased at even the very small reserve it made from their monopoly of jurisdiction. It speedily fell to the ground, to the extreme regret of the earnest friends of popular reformation that a design of so much original promise should have come to nothing.

All legislative consideration of the subject went into abeyance; and has so remained, with trifling exception,

cause that prompted these observations. But they were made with a general reference to a hypocritical cant much in vogue at that time, and long before. That it *was* hypocritical appeared plainly enough from the circumstance, that those solemn rebukes of the profanation of religion, by implicating it with political affairs, smote almost exclusively on one side. Let the religious moralist, or the preacher, amalgamate religion as largely as he pleased with the *proper sort* of political sentiments, that is, the servile, and then it was all right.

through an interval in which far more than a million, in England alone, of the children who were at that time within that stage of their life on which chiefly a general scheme would have acted, have grown up to animal maturity, destitute of all that can, in any decent sense of the word, be called education. Think of the difference between their state as it is, and what it might have been if there had at that time existed patriotism, liberality, and moral principle, enough to enact and carry into effect a comprehensive measure. The longer the neglect the more aggravated the pressure with which the subject returns upon us. It is forcing itself on attention with a demand as peremptory as ever was the necessity of an embankment against the peril of inundation. There are no indications to make us sanguine as to the disposition of the most influential classes; but it were little less than infatuation not to see the necessity of some extraordinary proceeding, to establish a fortified line between us and—not national dishonour; *that* is flagrantly upon us, but—the destruction of national safety.

As to national dishonour, by comparison with what may be seen elsewhere, it is hardly possible for a patriot to feel a more bitter mortification than in reading the description, as recently given by M. Cousin, of the state of education in the Prussian dominions, and then looking over the hideous exhibition of ignorance and barbarism in this country; in representing to himself the vernal intelligence, (as we may rightly name it,) the information, the sense of decorum, the fitness for

rational converse, which must quite inevitably diffuse a value and grace throughout the general youthful character under such a discipline, and then changing his view to what may be seen all over his own country—an incalculable and ever-increasing tribe of human creatures, growing up in a condition to show what a wretched and offensive thing is human nature left to itself.

When neither opprobrium, nor prospective policy, nor sense of duty, can constrain the attention of the officially and virtually ruling part of society to an important national interest, it is sure to come on them at last in some more alarming and imperative manifestation. The present and very recent times have afforded significant indication of what an ignorant populace are capable of believing; and of being successfully instigated to perpetrate. It is not to be pretended that such ignorance, and such liabilities to mischief, exist only in particular spots of the land, as if the local outbreaks were merely incidental and insulated facts, standing out of community with any thing widely pervading the mass. Within but very few years of the present date, we have had the spectacle of millions, literally millions, of the people of England, yielding an absolute credence to the most monstrous delusions respecting public questions and measures, imposed on them by dishonest artifice, and what may be called moral incendiarism; and these delusions of a nature to excite the passions of the multitude to crime. It is difficult to believe that all this can be seen without serious appre-

hension, by those who sustain the primary responsibility for devising measures to secure the national *safety*, (that we may take the lowest term of national welfare;) and that they can be content to rest that security on expedients which, in keeping the people in order, make them no wiser or better. It would truly be a glorious change in our history, if we might at length see the national power wielded by enlightened, virtuous, and energetic spirits, not only to the bare effect of withstanding disorder and danger, but in a resolute invincible determination to redeem us from the national ignominy of exhibiting to the world, far in the nineteenth century, a rude, unprincipled, semi-barbarous populace.

Thus far the hopes which had flattered us with such a change, as a consequence of a political movement so considerable as to be denominated a revolution, have been grievously disappointed. We must wait, but with prognostics little encouraging, to see whether a professed concern for popular education will result in any effective scheme. That profession has hitherto been followed up with so little appearance of earnest conviction, or of high and comprehensive purpose, among the majority of the influential persons who, perhaps for decorum's sake, have made it, as to leave cause for apprehension that, if any such scheme were to be proposed, it would be in the first instance very limited in its compass, indecisive in its enforcement, and niggardly in its pecuniary appointments. Many of our legislators have never thought of investigating the condition of

the people, and are unaware of their deplorable destitution of all mental cultivation; and many have formed but a low and indistinct estimate of the kind and measure of cultivation desirable to be imparted. Very slowly does the conviction or the desire make its way among the favourites of fortune, that the portion of humanity so far below them should be raised to the highest mental condition compatible with the limitation and duties of their subordinate allotment.

No doubt, the most genuine zeal for the object would find difficulties in the way, of a magnitude to require a great and persevering exertion of power, were they only those opposed by the degraded condition of the people themselves; by the utter carelessness of one part, and the intractableness of another. Nor is it to be denied, that the differences of religious opinion, among the promoters of the design, must create considerable difficulty as to the mode and extent of religious instruction, to form a part of a comprehensive system. But we are told, besides, of we know not what obstruction to be encountered, from prejudices of prescription, privileged and peculiar interests, the jealous pride of venerable institutions, assumed rights of station and rank, punctilios of precedence, the tenacity of parties who find their advantage in things as they are, and so forth; all to be deferentially consulted.

If this mean that the old horror of a bold experimental novelty is still to be yielded to; that nothing in this so urgent affair is to be ventured but in a creeping inch-by-inch movement; that the reign of gross igno-

rance, with all its attendant vices, is to be allowed a very leisurely retreat, retaining its hold on a large portion of the present and following generations of the children, and therefore the adults; that their condition and fate shall be mainly left at the discretion of ignorant and often worthless parents; that there shall be no considerable positive exaction of local provision for the institution, or of attendance of those who should be benefited by it; that, in short, there shall not be a comprehensive application of the national power through its organ, the government, by authoritative, and, we must say, in some degree coercive measures, to abate as speedily as possible the national nuisance and calamity of such a state of the juvenile faculties and habits as we see glaring around us; and all this because homage is demanded to anticipated prejudices, selfishness of privilege, venerable institutions, pride of station, jealousy of the well-endowed, and the like:—if this be what is meant, we may well ask whether these factitious prerogatives, that would thus interfere to render feeble, partial, and slow, any projected exertion to rescue the nation from barbarism, turpitude, and danger, be not themselves among the most noxious things in the land, and the most deserving to be extirpated.

How readily will the proudest descend to the plea of impotence when the exhortation is to something which they care not for or dislike, but to which, at the same time, it would be disreputable to avow any other than the most favourable sentiments, to be duly expressed

in the form of great regret that the thing is impracticable. Impracticable—and does the case come at last to be this, that from one cause and another, from the arrogance of the high and the untowardness of the low, the obstinacy of prejudice, and the rashness of innovation, the dissensions among friends of a beneficent design and the discountenance of those who are no better than enemies, a mighty state, triumphantly boasting of every *other* kind of power, absolutely *cannot* execute a scheme for rescuing its people from being what a great Authority on this subject has pronounced "the worst educated nation in Europe?" Then let it submit, with all its pomp, pride, and grandeur, to stand in derision and proverb on the face of the earth.

With a view to a wider circulation than that which is limited by the price of the volume published in an expensive form and style of printing, it has been deemed advisable to publish a cheap edition of the "Essay on Popular Ignorance." It is not in any degree an abridgment of the preceding edition; the only omission, of the slightest consequence, being in a few places where changes have been rendered necessary by the subsequent conduct of our national authorities, as affecting our speculations and prospects in relation to general education; while, on the other hand, there are numerous little additions and corrections, in attempts to bring out the ideas more fully, or with some little afterthought of discrimination or exception. In some instances the

connexion and dependence of the series of thoughts have been rendered more obvious, and the sentences reduced to a somewhat more simple and compact construction; but the principal object in this *final revisal* has been literary correction, without any material enlargement or change.

It is hoped that this reprint in a popular form may serve the purpose of contributing something, in cooperation with the present exertions, to expose, and partially remedy, the lamentable and nationally disgraceful ignorance to which the people of our country have been so long abandoned.



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VOLUME IX.



From an old print after Giovanni Domenico Campiglia

THE CÆSARS

AND

OTHER PAPERS

BY

T~~HOMAS~~ DE QUINCEY

EDINBURGH
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PREFACE.

"The Cæsars," it may be right to mention, was written in a situation which denied me the use of books; so that with the exception of a few penciled extracts in a pocket-book from the Augustan history, I was obliged to depend upon my memory for materials, in so far as respected facts. These materials for the Western Empire are not more scanty than meagre; and in that proportion so much the greater is the temptation which they offer to free and sceptical speculation. To this temptation I have yielded intermittingly; but from a fear (perhaps a cowardly fear) of being classed as a dealer in licentious paradox, I checked myself exactly where the largest license might have been properly allowed to a bold spirit of incredulity. In particular, I cannot bring myself to believe, nor ought therefore to have assumed the tone of a believer, in the inhuman atrocities charged upon the earlier Cæsars. Guided by my own instincts of truth and probability, I should, for instance, have summarily exploded the most revolting among the crimes imputed to Nero. But too often, writers who have been compelled to deal in ghastly horrors form a taste for such scenes; and

sometimes, as may be seen exemplified in those who record the French "Reign of Terror," become angrily credulous, and impatient of the slightest hesitation in going along with the maniacal excesses recorded. Apparently Suetonius suffered from that morbid appetite. Else would he have countenanced the hyperbolical extravagances current about the murder of Agrippina? What motive had Nero for murdering his mother? or, assuming the slightest motive, what difficulty in accomplishing this murder by secret agencies? What need for the elaborate contrivance (as in some costly pantomime) of self-dissolving ships? But waiving all this superfluity of useless mechanism, which by requiring many hands in working it must have multiplied the accomplices in the crime, and have published his intentions to all Rome, how do these statements tally with the instant resort of the lady herself, upon reaching land, to the affectionate sympathy of her son? Upon this sympathy she counted: but how, if all Rome knew that, like a hunted hare, she was then running on the traces of her last double before receiving her death-blow? Such a crime, so causeless as regarded provocation, so objectless as regarded purpose, and so revolting to the primal impulses of nature, would, unless popularly viewed as the crime of a maniac, have alienated from Nero even his poor simple nurse, and other dependants, who showed for many years after his death the strength of their attachment by adorning his grave with flowers, and by inflicting such vindictive insults as they could upon the corpse of his antagonist, Galba.

Meantime that he might be insane, and entitled to the

excuse of insanity, is possible. If not, what a monstrous part in the drama is played by the Roman people, who, after this alleged crime, and believing it, yet sat with tranquillity to hear his musical performances! But a taint of insanity certainly *did* prevail in the blood of the earlier Cæsars, *i. e.*, down to Nero.

Over and above this taint of physical insanity, we should do well to allow for the preternatural tendency towards moral insanity generated and nursed by the anomalous situation of the *Imperator*—a situation unknown before or since; in which situation the license allowed to the individual, after the popular *comitia* had virtually become extinct, hid too often from his eye this perilous fact, that in one solitary direction, viz., in regard to the representative functions which he discharged as embodying the Roman majesty, he, the supreme of men upon earth, had a narrower license or discretionary power of action than any slave upon whose neck he trode. Better for *him*, for his own comfort in living, and for his chance of quiet in dying, that he should violate the moral sense by every act of bloody violence or of brutal appetite, than that he should trifle with the heraldic sanctity of his Imperatorial robe.

THE ESSENES.—The paper on *The Essenes*, I will frankly acknowledge to my critical reader, has not had the good fortune to conciliate the sanction of the most learned amongst my friends. *Good fortune*, I say, as insinuating that its failure may be due to momentary accidents of hurry, or dyspepsy in the critic. For undeniably *habent*

sua fata libelli, by which proposition, I presume, is meant that books, and intellectual speculations of every class, are liable to good and bad luck, so little corresponding to their true proportions of merit, that sometimes for a season the momentary false reputation and the ultimate just reputation continue moving in opposite directions.

Some indulgence is due to any attempt at reading into coherent meaning what, from the very beginning, was a SECRET society *upon any hypothesis;* what was wilfully and elaborately darkened in order to evade an urgent danger; what was reported only by a traitor who could not be suffered to understand much that he actually saw; and what must now be read after a lapse of two thousand years by the glimmerings of a lamp muffled from the very first to defeat the purposes of perfidious hostility. Some indulgence, I repeat, may be claimed under such complex circumstances of difficulty. Better, meantime, by a thousandfold, is absolute sincerity in a critic than treacherous indulgence. Honourable, therefore, I hold it to the critic, and flattering to myself, that the answer to my *Essenes* should have been sternly, and *sans phrase*, "It won't do." Perhaps no; perhaps yes: we shall see. But, in the meantime, let me observe, that if my affirmative will not do, neither will a blank negative. Before an opponent can place himself in a position for rejecting my theory, he must have taken these following steps in advance towards a counter theory of his own.

First, He must explain why it is that no writer in the New Testament mentions the Essenes, or even throws out

a momentary hint of their existence.* On the assumption that the Essenes were not a Christian but a Judaic society, there could be no motive at all for ignoring them.

Second, He must account for the mysterious approximation to each other between the two codes of practical doctrine—Christian and Essenic. The one is but the travesty

* Some persons, not fully masters of the case, will perhaps object—That surely this difficulty presses even on myself. *No*, I reply; not at all. Any notice of the Essenes would not occur in the New Testament, because any motive to such a society would not arise, until that point in the *Acts of the Apostles* at which occurs the protomartyrdom of St. Stephen; consequently not until near the close of the apostolic history. Whatever motive therefore impelled the Apostles to discontinue their narrative at the particular crisis which now forms its close, would at any rate by its natural operation have excluded the secret narrative of the Essenes. But over and above that motive, whatsoever it might be, there was another. Until the Roman triumph over Jerusalem and the ecclesiastical polity of the Temple, the danger subsisted unabated which the Essenic scheme had been devised to meet. This danger would always have menaced the Christians in Palestine, so long as the Temple service continued to flourish And the original danger, which first prompted the Essenic resource, would—so long as it lasted—exact the same original caution as to the publication of its details—all or any. As respected the particular case of the Essenes, there was therefore a separate and special ground of silence; and too obviously it was a matter of life and death. As to the more general motive which determined the Apostles in drawing their narrative to a close, I presume that it arose from the simple fact that the primary object was at length realized. That object had been to trace the Christian church from its earliest beginnings. This had now been sufficiently accomplished. It was no purpose of the evangelists or the Apostles to write narratives of mere gratification to curiosity. And any arrear of explanations which still remained due, was simply a fuller development of *doctrinal* truth, which accordingly presented itself henceforward in direct epistles from the Apostles.

of the other. The Essenic reads like such a parody of Christian ethics as would naturally emerge from the coarse hands of a Jew, intensely unspiritual and worldly, such as Josephus. But, if there were any truth in the high pre-Christian antiquity which Josephus ascribes to Essenism, in that case there must have been a Christianity before Christ. This insurmountable difficulty any opponent of my theory draws upon himself.

Third, If there were eight thousand of the Josephan, *i.e.*, the pretended non-Christian Essenes, and as their sectarian opinions were so widely published, how happened it that Christ, who talked freely with every order of men and women in Judæa, never by accident fell in with one of this fraternity? Or if we could suppose it possible that in so limited a territory this failure of *personal* rencontre should occur naturally, how happened it that Christ did not invite one of their body to his presence, or did not expressly visit some one of their pretended stations, so as to force their errors, or their truths, before the public eye?

Fourth, Supposing that, upon any inexplicable motive, such a casual meeting or such a deliberate visit did not occur from the Christian side, then why did not crowds of the Essenes spontaneously resort to Christ, as a teacher who, by repeating *their* doctrines without any recognition of their community as the original well-head of such truths, was in effect ignoring themselves, and publishing in all quarters his disbelief of their existence?

Finally, If all *personal* interviews on overtures from either side were unaccountably intercepted, how happened

it that the doctrines and usages at least of the Essenes were not brought before Christ either by friend or by foe? or, this failing, were not subsequently noticed and discussed by the Apostles?

It has been said repeatedly that the creed of the Papal Church, or at least her theory, so far travels on the same route with the speculation here traced out, that no countenance is given to the pretensions of the Essenes as a Jewish philosophic sect. The plagiarisms from Christianity have apparently been felt as insufferable. But there the Romish Church halts: she denies, but she finds no satisfactory affirmative creed to substitute. We differ, therefore (*who* differ? Why, *Ego et rex meus*—I and the Pope), in this important point; and entirely to my advantage. His Holiness denies; and I am bound to think him right; for *I* deny. But on *his* part this denial is a pure *machtspruch*, as the Germans term it; a dogmatic assertion not resting on any pleadings whatever of fact or argument. Whereas *my* denial explains its own why and wherefore; substituting besides for the frail fluttering tent which it boasts to have demolished, a substantial house. So learned a church as the Roman Catholic would naturally have long since anticipated this substitution, had it depended much or chiefly on erudition; it is not however erudition that is primarily required in such suggestions, but conjectural felicity.

This is a qualification depending so much upon luck, and in so small a proportion upon any meritorious endowment, that I should not scruple to claim it for myself, and yet acknowledge any vanity in claiming it, were I abso-

lutely satisfied with all the timbers and joists of my new Essenic structure, or were it "sure as death" that no horrid iconoclast, even whilst I am yet speaking, may not be prowling round my new creation, and pointing his fatal finger to symptoms of dry-rot creeping this way or that, like cancer in unsuspected corners. Owning to this uneasiness myself (yet after all, not more in degree than the underwriters upon the Great Eastern will be likely to feel when she is out upon her trial trip), I cannot reasonably quarrel with the reader if he should utter even treasonable opinions upon my self-ascribed conjectural felicity. My own doubts are a license for *his*.

AELIUS LAMIA.—But no such license extends to the next case of *Aelius Lamia:* In that case I acknowledge no shadow of doubt. I have a list of conjectural decipherings applied by classical doctors to desperate lesions and abscesses in the text of famous classic authors; and I am really ashamed to say, that my own emendation stands *facile princeps* among them all. I must repeat, however, that this pre-eminence is only that of luck; and I must remind the critic, that, in judging of this case, he must not do as one writer did on the first publication of this little paper, viz., entirely lose sight of the main incident in the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. Never perhaps on this earth was so threatening a whisper, a whisper so portentously significant, uttered between man and man in a single word, as in that secret suggestion of an *Orpheutic voice* where a *wife* was concerned.



THE CÆSARS.

THE majesty of the Roman Cæsar Semper Augustus has never yet been fully appreciated; nor has any man yet explained sufficiently in what respects this title and this office were absolutely unique. There was but one Rome: no other city, as we are satisfied by the collation of many facts, has ever rivalled this astonishing metropolis in the grandeur of magnitude; and not many—perhaps if we except the cities built under Grecian auspices along the line of three thousand miles, from Western Capua or Syracuse to the Euphrates and oriental Palmyra, none at all—in the grandeur of architectural display. Speaking even of London, we ought in all reason to say—the *Nation of London*, and not the City of London; but of Rome in her meridian hours, nothing else could be said in the naked rigour of logic. A million and a half of souls*—that population, apart from

* "*A million and a half*," which was the true numerical return of population from the English capital about twenty years back, when this paper was written. At present, and for some time, it has stood at two millions *plus* as many thousands as express the days of a solar year. But, if adjusted to meet the corrections due upon the annual growths of the people, in that case the true return must *now* (viz., January of the year 1859) show a considerable excess beyond two and a half millions. Do we mean to assert, then, that the ancient Rome of the Cæsars, that mighty ancestral forerunner of the *Papal* Rome, which, in this year 1859, counts about 180,000 citizens (or, in fact, above Edinburgh by a trifle; by 200,000 below Glasgow; by 150,000

any other distinctions—is *per se* for London a justifying ground for such a classification; *à fortiori*, then, will it belong to a city which counted from one horn to the other of its mighty suburbs not less than four millions of inhabitants at the very least, as we resolutely maintain after reviewing all that has been written on that much-vexed theme, and not impossibly half as many more. Republican Rome had

below Manchester), did in reality ever surmount numerically the now awful London? Is that what we mean? Yes; that is what we mean. We must remember the prodigious *area* which Rome stretched over. We must remember that feature in the Roman domestic architecture (so impressively insisted on by the rhetorician Aristides), in which the ancient Rome resembled the ancient Edinburgh, and so far greatly eclipsed London, viz, the vast ascending series of storeys, laying stratum upon stratum, tier upon tier, of men and women, as in some mighty theatre of human hives. Not that London is deficient in thousands of lofty streets; but the storeys rarely ascend beyond the fourth, or, at most, the fifth; whereas the old Rome and the old Edinburgh counted at intervals by sevens or even tens. This element in the calculation being allowed for, perhaps the four millions of Lipsius may seem a reasonable population for the flourishing days of *Cæsarian* Rome, which ran far ahead of Republican Rome. On this assumption, Rome will take the *first* place, London (as it now is) the *second*, Paris (of to-day) the *third*, New York (800,000), and probably the ancient Alexandria, the *fourth* places on the world's register of mighty metropolitan cities. Babylon and Nineveh are too entirely within the exaggerating influences of misty traditions and nursery fables, like the vapoury exhalations of the *Fata Morgana*—a species of delusion resting upon a primary basis of reality, but repeating this reality so often, through endless self-multiplication, by means of optical reflexion and refraction, that the final result is little better than absolute fiction. And universally with regard to Asiatic cities (above all, with regard to Chinese cities), the reader must carry with him these cautions:—

1st, That Asiatics, with rare exceptions, have little regard for truth: by habit and policy they are even more mendacious than they are perfidious. Fidelity to engagements, sincerity, and disinterested veracity, rank, in Oriental estimates, as the perfection of idiocy.

her *prerogative* tribe ; the earth has its *prerogative* city ; and that city was Rome.

As was the city, such was its prince—mysterious, solitary, unique. Each was to the other an adequate counterpart, each reciprocally that perfect mirror which reflected, as *in alia materia*, those incommunicable attributes of grandeur, that under the same shape and denomination never upon this earth were destined to be revived. Rome has not been repeated ; neither has Cæsar. *Ubi Cæsar, ibi Roma*, was a maxim of Roman jurisprudence. And the

2*d*, That, having no *liberal* curiosity, the Chinese man never troubles his head about the statistical circumstances of his own city, province, or natal territory. Such researches he would regard as ploughing the sands of the sea-shore, or counting the waves

3*d*, That two grounds of falsification being thus laid, in (A) the ostentatious mendacity, and (B) which glories in its own blindness, the ignorance of all those who ought to be authorities upon such questions, a third ground arises naturally from the peculiar and special character of Eastern cities, which, for all European ears, too readily aids in misleading. Too often such cities are improvised by means of mud, turf, light spars, canvas, &c. Hibernian cabins, Scotch bothies (which word is radically the same as the *booth* of English fairs), hovels for sheltering cattle from the weather,—or buildings of a similar style and fugitive make-shift character, under the hurried workmanship of three or four hundred thousand men, run up within a single forenoon a perishable town that meets the necessities of a southern climate Schiller, in his "Wallenstein," sketches such a light canvas town as the hurried *extempore* creation of soldiers. Schiller's description is a sketch ; and such a military creation is itself but a sketch of a regular and finished town Military by its first outline and suggestion, such a frail scenical town always retains its military make-shift character. and is, in fact, to the very last, an encampment of gipsies or migrating travellers, rather than an architectural residence of settlers who have ceased from vagrancy. Even as an *improvised* home, such a stage mimicry of a city could find toleration only in a warm climate. But such a climate, and such slender masquerading abodes, are found throughout the Northern Tropic in the southern regions of Asia.

same maxim may be translated into a wider meaning; in which it becomes true also for our historical experience. Cæsar and Rome have flourished and expired together. Each reciprocally was essential to the other. Even the Olympian Pantheon needed Rome for its full glorification; and Jove himself first knew his own grandeur when robed and shrined as Jupiter Capitolinus. The illimitable attributes of the Roman prince, boundless and comprehensive as the universal air—like that also bright and apprehensible to the most vagrant eye, yet in parts (and those not far removed) unfathomable as outer darkness (for no chamber in a dungeon could shroud in more impenetrable concealment a deed of murder than the upper chambers of the air)—these attributes, so impressive to the imagination, and which all the subtlety of the Roman* wit could as little fathom as the fleets of Cæsar could traverse the Polar basin, or unlock the gates of the Pacific, are best symbolized, and find their most appropriate exponent, in the illimitable city itself—that Rome, whose centre, the Capitol, was immovable as Teneriffe or Atlas, but whose circumference was shadowy, uncertain, restless, and advancing as the frontiers of her all-conquering empire. It is false to say, that with Cæsar came the destruction of Roman greatness Peace, hollow rhetoricians! until Cæsar came, Rome was a minor; by him she attained her majority, and fulfilled her destiny. Caius Julius, you say, deflowered the virgin purity of her civil liberties. Doubtless, then, Rome had risen immaculate from the arms of Sylla and of Marius. But, if it were Caius Julius that deflowered Rome, if under

* Or even of modern wit, witness the vain attempt of so many eminent JCTI (i e, jurisconsulti), and illustrious *Antecessors* (i e, doctors of law), to explain in self-consistency the differing functions of the Roman Cæsar, and in what sense he was *legibus solutus*.

him she forfeited her dowry of civic purity, if to him she first unloosed her maiden zone, then be it affirmed boldly—that she reserved her greatest favours for the noblest of her wooers; and we may plead the justification of Falconbridge for his mother's transgression with the lion-hearted king—such a sin was self-ennobled. Did Julius deflower Rome? Then, by that consummation, he caused her to fulfil the functions of her nature; he compelled her to exchange the imperfect and inchoate condition of a mere *fœmina* for the perfections of a *mulier*. And, metaphor apart, we maintain that Rome lost no liberties by the mighty Julius. That which in tendency, and by the spirit of her institutions—that which, by her very corruptions and abuses co-operating with her laws, Rome promised and involved in the germ—even that, and nothing less or different, did Rome unfold and accomplish under this Julian violence. The rape [if such it were] of Cæsar, her final Romulus, completed for Rome that which the rape under Romulus, her initial or inaugurating Cæsar, had prosperously begun. And thus by one supreme man was a nation-city matured; and from the everlasting and nameless* city was a man produced—capable of taming her indomitable nature, and of forcing her to immolate her wild virginity to the state best fitted for the destined "Mother of empires." Peace, then, rhetoricians, false threnodists of false liberty! hollow chanters over the ashes of a hollow republic! Without Cæsar, we affirm a thousand times, that there would have been no perfect Rome; and, but for Rome, there could have been no such man as Cæsar.

Both then were immortal; each worthy of each. And

* "*Nameless* city:" The true name of Rome it was a point of religion to conceal, and, in fact, it was never revealed

the *Cui viget nihil simile aut secundum* of the poet was as true of one as of the other. For, if by comparison with Rome other cities were but villages, with even more propriety it may be asserted, that after the Roman Cæsars all modern kings, kesars, or emperors, are mere phantoms of royalty. The Cæsar of Western Rome—he only of all earthly potentates, past or to come, could be said to reign as a *monarch*, that is, as a solitary king. He was not the greatest of princes, simply because there was no other but himself. There were doubtless a few outlying rulers, of unknown names and titles, upon the margins of his empire, there were tributary lieutenants and barbarous *reguli*, the obscure vassals of his sceptre, whose homage was offered on the lowest step of his throne, and scarcely known to him but as objects of disdain. But these feudatories could no more break the unity of his empire, which embraced the whole οἰκουμενή—the total habitable world as then known to geography, or recognised by the muse of history—than at this day the British empire on the sea can be brought into question or made conditional, because some chief of Owyhee or Tongataboo should proclaim a momentary independence of the British trident, or should even offer a transient outrage to her sovereign flag. Such a *tempestas in matulâ* might raise a brief uproar in his little native archipelago, but too feeble to reach the shores of Europe by an echo—or to ascend by so much as an infantine *susurrus* to the ears of the British Neptune. Parthia, it is true, might pretend to the dignity of an empire. But her sovereigns, though sitting in the seat of the great king (ὁ βασιλεύς), were no longer the rulers of a vast and polished nation. They were regarded as barbarians—potent only by their standing army, not upon the larger basis of civic strength; and, even under this limitation,

they were supposed to owe more to the circumstances of their position—their climate, their remoteness, and their inaccessibility except through arid and sultry deserts—than to intrinsic resources, such as could be permanently relied on in a serious trial of strength between the two powers. The kings of Parthia, therefore, were far enough from being regarded in the light of antagonist forces to the majesty of Rome. And, these withdrawn from the comparison, who else was there—what prince, what king, what potentate of any denomination, to break the universal calm, that through centuries continued to lave, as with the quiet undulations of summer lakes, the sacred footsteps of the Cæsarean throne?

The Byzantine court which, merely as the inheritor of some fragments from that august throne, was drunk with excess of pride, surrounded itself with elaborate expressions of a grandeur beyond what mortal eyes were supposed able to sustain. These fastidious, and sometimes fantastic ceremonies, originally devised as the very extremities of anti-barbarism, were often themselves but too nearly allied in spirit to the barbaresque in taste. In reality, some parts of the Byzantine court ritual were arranged in the same spirit as that of China or the Burman empire; or fashioned by anticipation, as one might think, on the practice of that Oriental Cham (the progenitor, by the way, of the present Chinese emperor), who used daily to proclaim by sound of trumpet to the kings in the four corners of the earth, that they, having dutifully awaited the close of *his* dinner, might now with his royal license go to their own.

From such vestiges of *derivative* grandeur, propagated to ages so remote from itself, and sustained by manners so different from the spirit of her own,—we may faintly measure the strength of the original impulse given to the feelings of

men by the *sacred* majesty of the Roman throne. How potent must that splendour have been, whose mere reflection shot rays upon a distant crown, under another heaven, and across the wilderness of fourteen centuries ! Splendour, thus transmitted, thus sustained, and thus imperishable, argues a transcendent vigour in the basis of radical power. Broad and deep must those foundations have been laid, which could support an "arch of empire", rising to that giddy altitued—an altitude which sufficed to bring it within the ken of posterity to the sixtieth generation.

Power is measured by resistance. Upon such a scale, if it were applied with skill, the *relations* of greatness in Rome to the greatest of all that has gone before her, and hitherto has come after her, would first be adequately revealed. The youngest reader will know that the grandest forms in which the *collective* might of the human race has manifested itself, are the four monarchies. Four times have the distributive forces of nations gathered themselves, under the strong compression of the sword, into mighty aggregates—denominated *Universal Empires* or Monarchies. These are noticed in the Holy Scriptures; and it is upon *their* warrant that men have supposed no fifth monarchy or universal empire possible in an earthly sense ; but that, whenever such an empire arises, it will have Christ for its head ; in other words, that no fifth *monarchia* can take place until Christianity shall have swallowed up all other forms of religion, and shall have gathered the whole family of man into one fold under one all-conquering Shepherd. Hence* the fana-

* This we mention, because a great error has been sometimes committed in exposing *their* error, which consisted, not in supposing that for a fifth time men were to be gathered under one sceptre, and that sceptre wielded by Jesus Christ, but in supposing that this great era had then arrived, or that with no deeper moral revolution men could be fitted for that yoke.

ties of 1650, who proclaimed Jesus for their king, and who did sincerely anticipate his near advent in great power, and under some personal manifestation, were usually styled *Fifth-Monarchists.*

However, waiving the question (interesting enough in itself)—Whether upon earthly principles a fifth universal empire could by possibility arise, in the present condition of knowledge for man individually, and of organization for man in general—this question waived, and confining ourselves to the comparison of those four monarchies which actually have existed,—of the Assyrian or earliest, we may remark, that it found men in no state of cohesion. This cause, which came in aid of its first foundation, would probably continue; and would diminish the *intensity* of the power in the same proportion as it promoted its *extension.* This monarchy would be absolute only by the personal presence of the monarch; elsewhere, from mere defect of organization, it would and must betray the total imperfections of an elementary state, and of a first experiment. More by the weakness inherent in its enemy, than by its own strength, did the Persian spear of Cyrus prevail against the Assyrian. Two centuries revolved, seven or eight generations, when Alexander found himself in the same position as Cyrus for building a third monarchy, and aided by the self-same vices of luxurious effeminacy in his enemy, confronted with the self-same virtues of enterprise and hardihood in his compatriot soldiers. The native Persians, in the earliest and very limited import of that name, were a poor and hardy race of mountaineers. So were the men of Macedon; and neither one tribe nor the other found any adequate resistance in the luxurious occupants of Babylonia. We may add, with respect to these two earliest monarchies, that the Assyrian was undefined with regard to space, and

the Persian fugitive with regard to time. But for the third—the Grecian or Macedonian—we know that the arts of civility, and of civil organization, had made great progress before the Roman strength was measured against it. In Macedon, in Achaia, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in Egypt,—everywhere the members of this empire had begun to knit; the cohesion was far closer, the development of their resources more complete; the resistance, therefore, by many hundred degrees more formidable: consequently, by the fairest inference, the power in that proportion greater which laid the foundations of this last great monarchy. It is probable, indeed, both *à priori*, and upon the evidence of various facts which have survived, that each of the four great empires successively triumphed over an antagonist, barbarous in comparison of itself, and each *by* and through that very superiority in the arts and policy of civilisation.

Rome, therefore, which came last in the succession, and swallowed up the three great powers that had *seriatim* cast the human race into one mould, and had brought them under the unity of a single will, entered by inheritance upon all that its predecessors in that career had appropriated, but in a condition of far ampler development. Estimated merely by longitude and latitude, the territory of the Roman empire was the finest by much that has ever fallen under a single sceptre. Amongst modern empires, doubtless, the Spanish of the sixteenth century, and the British of the present, cannot but be admired as prodigious growths out of so small a stem. In that view, they will be endless monuments in attestation of the marvels which are lodged in civilisation. But considered in and for itself, and with no reference to the proportion of the creating forces, each of these empires has the great defect of being disjointed, and even insusceptible of perfect union. It is in fact no *vinculum* of social

organization which held them together, but the ideal *vinculum* of a common fealty, and of submission to the same sceptre. This is not like the tie of manners, operative even where it is not perceived, but like the distinctions of geography—existing to-day, forgotten to-morrow—and abolished by a stroke of the pen, or a trick of diplomacy. Russia, again, a mighty empire as respects the simple grandeur of magnitude, builds her power upon sterility. She has it in her power to seduce an invading foe into vast circles of starvation, of which the radii measure a thousand leagues. Frost and snow are confederates of her strength. She is strong by her very weakness. But Rome laid a belt about the Mediterranean of a thousand miles in breadth—of more than two thousand in length; and within that zone she comprehended not only all the great cities of the ancient world, but so perfectly did she lay the garden of the world in every climate, and for every mode of natural wealth, within her own ring fence, that since that era no land, *not* having been part and parcel of the Roman empire, has ever risen into strength and opulence, except where unusual artificial industry has availed to counteract the tendencies of nature. So entirely had Rome engrossed whatsoever was rich by the mere bounty of native endowment.

Vast, therefore, unexampled, immeasurable, was the basis of natural power upon which the Roman throne reposed. The military force which put Rome in possession of this inordinate power, was certainly in some respects artificial; but the power itself was natural, and not subject to the ebbs and flows which attend the commercial empires of our days; and, in fact, to be commercial is the very laurel-crown of man's development as civilisation slowly ascends to its supreme stages, for all are in part commercial. The depression, the reverses, of Rome, were confined to one shape—

famine; a terrific shape, doubtless, but one which levies its penalty of suffering, not by elaborate processes that do not exhaust their total cycle in less than long periods of years. Fortunately for those who survive, no arrears of misery are allowed by this scourge of ancient days;* the total penalty is paid down at once. As respected the hand of man, Rome slept for ages in absolute security. She could suffer only by the wrath of Providence; and, so long as she continued to be Rome, for many a generation she only of all the monarchies has feared no mortal hand,†

——— "God and his Son except,
Created thing nought valued she nor shunn'd."

That the possessor and wielder of such enormous power—power alike admirable for its extent, for its intensity, and for its consecration from all counter-forces which could restrain it, or endanger it—should be regarded as sharing in the attributes of supernatural beings, is no more than might naturally be expected. All other known power in human hands has either been extensive, but wanting in intensity—or intense, but wanting in extent—or, thirdly, liable to permanent control and hazard from some antagonist power commensurate with itself. But the Roman power,

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* "*Of ancient days.*"—For it is remarkable, and it serves to mark an indubitable progress of mankind, that, before the Christian era, famines were of frequent occurrence in countries the most civilised; afterwards they became rare, and latterly have entirely altered their character into occasional dearths.

† Unless that hand were her own armed against herself; upon which topic there is a burst of noble eloquence in one of the ancient Panegyrici, when haranguing the Emperor Theodosius: "Thou, Rome! that, having once suffered by the madness of Cinna, and of the cruel Marius raging from banishment, and of Sylla, that won his wreath of prosperity from thy disasters, and of Cæsar, compassionate to the dead, didst shudder at every blast of the trumpet filled by the breath of civil commotion,—thou, that, besides the wreck of thy sol-

in its centuries of grandeur, involved every mode of strength, with absolute immunity from all kinds and degrees of weakness. It ought not, therefore, to surprise us that the emperor, as the depositary of this charmed power, should have been looked upon as a *sacred* person, and the imperial family considered a '*divina* domus.' It is an error to regard this as excess of adulation, or as built *originally* upon hypocrisy. Undoubtedly the expressions of this feeling are sometimes gross and overcharged, as we find them in the very greatest of the Roman poets: for example, it shocks us to find a fine writer, in anticipating the future canonization of his patron, and his instalment amongst the heavenly hosts, begging him to keep his distance warily from this or that constellation, and to be cautious of throwing his weight into either hemisphere, until the scale of proportions were accurately adjusted. These, doubtless, are passages degrading alike to the poet and his subject. But why? Not because they ascribe to the emperor a sanctity which he had not in the minds of men universally, or which even to the writer's feeling was exaggerated, but because it was ex-

diery perishing on either side, didst bewail, amongst thy spectacles of domestic woe, the luminaries of thy senate extinguished, the heads of thy consuls fixed upon a halberd, weeping for ages over thy self-slaughtered Catos, thy headless Ciceros (*truncosque Cicerones*), and unburied Pompeys,—to whom the party madness of thy own children had wrought in every age heavier woe than the Carthaginian thundering at thy gates, or the Gaul admitted within thy walls; on whom Œmathia, more fatal than the day of Allia,—Collina, more dismal than Cannæ,—had inflicted such deep memorials of wounds, that, from bitter experience of thy own valour, no enemy was to thee so formidable as thyself,—thou, Rome! didst now for the first time behold a civil war issuing in a hallowed prosperity, a soldiery appeased, recovered Italy, and for thyself liberty established. Now first in thy long annals thou didst rest from a civil war in such a peace, that righteously, and with maternal tenderness, thou mightst claim for it the honours of a civic triumph."

pressed coarsely, and as a *physical* power: now, everything physical is measurable by weight, motion, and resistance; and is therefore definite. But the very essence of whatsoever is supernatural lies in the indefinite. That power, therefore, with which the minds of men invested the emperor, was vulgarized (in Roman phrase *obsolefiebat*) by this coarse translation into the region of physics. Else it is evident, that any power which, by standing above all human control, occupies the next station to superhuman modes of authority, must be invested by all minds alike with some dim and undefined relation to the sanctities of the unseen world. Thus, for instance, the Pope, as the father of Catholic Christendom, could not *but* be viewed with awe by any Christian of deep feeling, as standing in some relation to the true and unseen Father of the spiritual body. Nay, considering that even false religions, as those of Pagan mythology, have probably never been utterly stripped of all truth, but that every such mode of error has perhaps been designed as a process, and adapted by Providence to the case of those who were capable of admitting no more perfect shape of truth, even the heads of such superstitions (the Dalai Lama, for instance) may not unreasonably be presumed as within the cognizance and special protection of Heaven. Much more may this be supposed of him to whose care was confided the weightier part of the human race; who had it in his power to promote or to suspend the progress of human improvement; and of whom, and the motions of whose will, the very prophets of Judea took cognizance. No nation, and no king, was utterly divorced from the councils of God. Palestine, as a central chamber of God's administration, stood in some relation to all. It has been remarked, as a mysterious and significant fact, that the founders of the great empires all had some connec-

tion, more or less, with the temple of Jerusalem. Melanchthon even observes it in his Sketch of Universal History, as worthy of notice—that Pompey died, as it were, within sight of that very temple which he had polluted. Let us not suppose that Paganism, or Pagan nations, were therefore excluded from the concern and tender interest of Heaven. They also had their place allowed. And we may be sure that, amongst them, the Roman emperor, as the great steward and factor for the happiness of more men, and men more cultivated, than ever before were intrusted to the motions of a single will, had a special, singular, and mysterious relation to the secret counsels of Heaven.

Even we, therefore, may lawfully attribute some sanctity to the Roman emperor. That the Romans did so with absolute sincerity is certain. The altars of the emperor had a twofold consecration; to violate them, was the double crime of treason and sacrilege. In his appearances of state and ceremony, the fire, the sacred fire ἐπόμπευε, moved pompously in ceremonial solemnity before him; and every other circumstance of divine worship attended the emperor in his lifetime.*

To this view of the imperial character and relations must be added one single circumstance, which in some measure altered the whole for the individual who happened to fill the office. The emperor *de facto* might be viewed under two aspects; there was the man, and there was the office. In his office he was immortal and sacred: but as a question might still be raised, by means of a mercenary army, as to the claims of the particular individual who at any

* The fact is, that the emperor was more of a sacred and divine creature in his lifetime than after his death. His consecrated character as a living ruler was a truth; his canonization, a fiction of tenderness to his memory.

time filled the office, the very sanctity and privilege of the character with which he was clothed might actually be turned against himself; and here it is, at this point, that the character of Roman emperor became truly and mysteriously awful. Gibbon has taken notice of the extraordinary situation of a *subject* in the Roman empire who should attempt to fly from the wrath of the Cæsar. Such was the ubiquity of the emperor that this was metaphysically hopeless. Except across pathless deserts or amongst barbarous nomads, it was impossible to find even a transient sanctuary from the imperial pursuit. If the fugitive went down to the sea, there he met the emperor : if he took the wings of the morning, and fled to the uttermost parts of the earth, there also was Cæsar in the person of his lieutenants. But, by a dreadful counter-charm, the same omnipresence of imperial anger and retribution which withered the hopes of the poor humble prisoner, met and confounded the emperor himself, when hurled from his elevation by some fortunate rival. All the kingdoms of the earth, to one in that situation, became but so many wards of the same infinite prison. Flight, if it were even successful for the moment, did but a little retard his inevitable doom. And so evident was this, that hardly in one instance did the fallen prince *attempt* to fly ; passively he met the death which was inevitable, in the very spot where ruin had overtaken him. Neither was it possible even for a merciful conqueror to show mercy ; for, in the presence of an army so mercenary and factious, his own safety was but too deeply involved in the extermination of rival pretenders to the crown.

Such, amidst the sacred security and inviolability of the office, was the hazardous tenure of the individual. Nor did his dangers always arise from persons in the rank of competitors and rivals. Sometimes it menaced him in

quarters which his eye had never penetrated, and from enemies too obscure to have reached his ear. By way of illustration we will cite a case from the life of the Emperor Commodus, which is wild enough to have furnished the plot of a romance, though as well authenticated as any other passage in that reign. The story is narrated by Herodian, and the outline was this :—A slave of noble qualities, and of magnificent person, having liberated himself from the degradations of bondage, determined to avenge his own wrongs by inflicting continual terror upon the town and neighbourhood which had witnessed his humiliation. For this purpose he resorted to the woody recesses of the province (somewhere in the modern Transsylvania), and, attracting to his wild encampment as many fugitives as he could, by degrees he succeeded in training a very formidable troop of freebooters. Partly from the energy of his own nature, and partly from the neglect and remissness of the provincial magistrates, the robber captain rose from less to more, until he had formed a little army, equal to the task of assaulting fortified cities. In this stage of his adventures, he encountered and defeated several of the imperial officers commanding large detachments of troops ; and at length grew of consequence sufficient to draw upon himself the emperor's eye, and the honour of his personal displeasure. In high wrath and disdain at the insults offered to his eagles by this fugitive slave, Commodu fulminated against him such an edict as left him no hope of much longer escaping with impunity.

Public vengeance was now awakened ; the imperial troops were marching from every quarter upon the same centre, and the slave became sensible that in a very short space of time he must be surrounded and destroyed. In this desperate situation he took a desperate resolution : he as-

sembled his troops, laid before them his plan, concerted the various steps for carrying it into effect, and then dismissed them as independent wanderers. So ends the first chapter of the tale.

The next opens in the passes of the Alps, whither, by various routes, of seven or eight hundred miles in extent, these men had threaded their way in manifold disguises through the very midst of the emperor's camps. According to this man's gigantic enterprise, in which the means were as audacious as the purpose, the conspirators were to rendezvous, and first to recognise each other, at the gates of Rome. From the Danube to the Tiber did this band of robbers severally pursue their perilous routes through all the difficulties of the road and the jealousies of the military stations, sustained by the mere thirst of vengeance—vengeance against that mighty foe whom they knew only by his proclamations against themselves. Everything continued to prosper; the conspirators met under the walls of Rome; the final details were arranged; and those also would have prospered but for a trifling accident. The season was one of general carnival at Rome; and, by the help of those disguises which the license of this festival time allowed, the murderers were to have penetrated as maskers to the emperor's retirement, when a casual word or two awoke the suspicions of a sentinel. One of the conspirators was arrested; under the terror and uncertainty of the moment, he made much ampler discoveries than were expected of him; the other accomplices were secured: and Commodus was delivered from the uplifted daggers of those who had sought him by months of patient wanderings, pursued through all the depths of the Illyrian forests, and the difficulties of the Alpine passes. It is not easy to find words of admiration commensurate to the energetic hardihood of

a slave—who, by way of answer and reprisal to an edict summarily consigning him to persecution and death, determines to cross Europe in quest of its author, though no less a person than the master of the world—to seek him out in the inmost recesses of his capital city, of his private palace, of his consecrated bed-chamber—and there to lodge a dagger in his heart, as the adequate reply to the imperial sentence of proscription against himself.

Such, amidst the superhuman grandeur and hallowed privileges of the Roman emperor's office, were the extraordinary perils which menaced the individual officer. The office rose by its grandeur to a region above the clouds and vapours of earth: the officer might find his personal security as unsubstantial as those wandering vapours. Nor is it possible that these circumstances of violent opposition can be better illustrated than in this tale of Herodian. Whilst the emperor's mighty arms were stretched out to arrest some potentate in the heart of Asia, a poor slave is silently and stealthily creeping round the base of the Alps, with the purpose of winning his way as a murderer to the imperial bed-chamber; Cæsar is watching some potent rebel of the Orient, at a distance of two thousand leagues, and he overlooks the dagger which is within three stealthy steps, and one tiger's leap, of his own heart. All the heights and the depths which belong to man's frailty, all the contrasts of glory and meanness, the extremities of what is highest and lowest in human casualties, meeting in the station of the Roman Cæsar Semper Augustus—have combined to call him into high marble relief, and to make him the most interesting study of all whom history has emblazoned with colours of fire and blood, or has crowned most lavishly with diadems of cypress and laurel.

This, as a general proposition, will be readily admitted.

But, meantime, it is remarkable that no field has been less trodden than the private memorials of those very Cæsars; whilst, at the same time, it is equally remarkable, that precisely with the first of the Cæsars commences the first page of what, in modern times, we understand by anecdotes. Suetonius is the earliest writer in that department of biography; so far as we know; he may be held first to have devised it as a mode of history, for he came a little before Plutarch. The six writers, whose sketches are collected under the general title of the *Augustan History*, followed in the same track. Though full of entertainment and of the most curious researches, they are all of them entirely unknown, except to a few elaborate scholars. We purpose to collect from these obscure, but most interesting memorialists, a few sketches and biographical portraits of these great princes, whose public life is sometimes known, but very rarely any part of their private and personal memoirs. We must, of course, commence with the mighty founder of the Cæsars. In his case we cannot expect so much of absolute novelty as in that of those who succeed. But if, in this first instance, we are forced to touch a little upon old things, we shall confine ourselves as much as possible to those which are susceptible of new aspects. For the whole gallery of those who follow, we can undertake that the memorials which we shall bring forward may be looked upon as belonging pretty much to what has hitherto been a sealed book.

CHAPTER I.

The character of the first Cæsar has perhaps never been worse appreciated than by him who in one sense described it best; that is, with most force and eloquence wherever he really *did* comprehend it. This was Lucan, who has nowhere exhibited more brilliant rhetoric, nor wandered more from the truth, than in the contrasted portraits of Cæsar and Pompey. The famous line, "*Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum*," is a fine feature of the real character, finely expressed. But if it had been Lucan's purpose (as possibly, with a view to Pompey's benefit, in some respects it was) utterly and extravagantly to falsify the character of the great Dictator, by no single trait could he more effectually have fulfilled that purpose, nor in fewer words, than by this expressive passage, "*Gaudensque viam fecisse ruinâ.*" Such a trait would be almost extravagant applied even to Marius, who (though in many respects a perfect model of Roman grandeur, massy, columnar, imperturbable, and more perhaps than any one man recorded in history capable of justifying the bold illustration of that character in Horace, "*Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ*") had, however, a ferocity in his character, and a touch of the devil in him, very rarely united with the same tranquil intrepidity. But for Cæsar, the all-accomplished statesman, the splendid orator, the man of

elegant habits and polished taste, the patron of the fine arts in a degree transcending all example of his own or the previous age, and as a man of general literature so much beyond his contemporaries, except Cicero, that he looked down even upon the brilliant Sylla as an illiterate person—to class such a man with the race of furious destroyers exulting in the desolations they spread, is to err not by an individual trait, but by the whole genus. The Attilas and the Tamerlanes, who rejoice in avowing themselves the scourges of God, and the special instruments of his wrath, have no one feature of affinity to the polished and humane Cæsar, and would as little have comprehended his character, as he could have respected theirs. Even Cato, the unworthy hero of Lucan, might have suggested to him a little more truth in this instance, by a celebrated remark which he made on the characteristic distinction of Cæsar, in comparison with other revolutionary disturbers; for, said he, whereas others had attempted the overthrow of the state in a continued paroxysm of fury, and in a state of mind resembling the lunacy of intoxication, that Cæsar, on the contrary, among that whole class of civil disturbers, was the only one who had come to the task in a temper of sobriety and moderation (*unum accessisse sobrium ad rem publicam delendam*).

In reality, Lucan did not think as he wrote. He had a purpose to serve; and in an age when to act like a freeman was no longer safe, he determined at least to write in that character. It is probable, also, that he wrote with a vindictive or a malicious feeling towards Nero; and, as the single means he had for gratifying such impulses, resolved upon sacrificing the grandeur of Cæsar's character wherever it should be found possible. Meantime, in spite of himself, Lucan for ever betrays his lurking consciousness of the

truth. Nor are there any testimonies to Cæsar's vast superiority more memorably pointed, than those which are indirectly and involuntarily extorted from this Catonic poet, by the course of his narration. Never, for example, was there within the same compass of words a more emphatic expression of Cæsar's essential and inseparable grandeur of thought, which could not be disguised or be laid aside for an instant, could not be taught or trained to run in the harness of ordinary unaspiring life, than is found in the three casual words—*Indocilis privata loqui.* The very mould, it seems, by Lucan's confession, of his trivial conversation was regal; nor could he abjure it for so much as a casual purpose. The acts of Cæsar speak also the same language; and as these are less susceptible of a false colouring than the features of a general character, we find this poet of liberty, in the midst of one continuous effort to distort the truth, and to dress up two scenical heroes, nevertheless forced by the mere necessities of history into a reluctant homage to Cæsar's supremacy of moral grandeur.

Of so great a man it must be interesting to know all the well-attested opinions which bear upon topics of universal interest to human nature; as indeed no others stood much chance of preservation, unless it were from so minute and curious a collector of *anecdotage* as Suetonius. And, first, it would be gratifying to know the opinion of Cæsar, if he had any peculiar to himself, on the great theme of Religion. It has been held, indeed, that the constitution of his mind, and the general cast of his character, indisposed him to religious thoughts. Nay, it has been common to class him amongst deliberate atheists; and some well-known anecdotes are current in books, which illustrate his contempt for the vulgar class of religious credulities. In this, however, he went no farther than Cicero, and other great con-

temporaries, who assuredly were no atheists. One mark perhaps of the wide interval which, in Cæsar's age, had begun to separate the Roman nobility from the hungry and venal populace who were daily put up to sale, and bought in crowds by the highest bidder, manifested itself in the increasing disdain for the tastes and ruling sympathies of the mere rude Quirites. No mob could be more abjectly servile than was that of Rome to the superstition of portents, prodigies, and omens. Thus far, in common with his order, and in this sense, Julius Cæsar was naturally a despiser of superstition. Mere strength of understanding would, perhaps, have made him such in any age, and apart from the circumstances of his personal history. But this natural tendency in him would doubtless receive a further bias in the same direction from the office of Pontifex Maximus, which he held at an early stage of his public career. This office, by letting him too much behind the curtain, and exposing too entirely the base machinery of ropes and pulleys, which sustained the miserable jugglery played off upon the popular credulity, impressed him perhaps even unduly with contempt for those who *could* be its dupes. And we may add, that Cæsar was constitutionally, as well as by accident of position, too much a man of the world, had too powerful a leaning to the virtues of *active* life, was governed by too partial a sympathy with the whole class of *active* forces in human nature, as contradistinguished from those which tend to contemplative purposes, under any circumstances, to have become a profound believer, or a steadfast reposer of his fears and anxieties, in religious influences. A man of the world is but another designation for a man indisposed to religious awe or to spiritual enthusiasm. Still it is a doctrine which we cherish, that grandeur of mind in any one department whatsoever, supposing only

that it exists in excess, disposes a man to some degree of sympathy with all other grandeur, however alien in its quality or different in its form. And upon this ground we presume the great Dictator to have had an interest in religious themes by mere compulsion of his own extraordinary elevation of mind, after making the fullest allowance for the special quality of that mind, which did certainly, to the whole extent of its characteristics, tend entirely to estrange him from such themes. We find, accordingly, that though sincerely a despiser of superstition, and with a frankness which must sometimes have been hazardous in that age, Cæsar was himself also superstitious. No man could have been otherwise who lived and conversed with that generation and people. But if superstitious, he was so after a mode of his own. In his very infirmities Cæsar manifested his greatness: his very littlenesses were noble.

"Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre."

That he placed some confidence in dreams, for instance, is certain: because, had he slighted them unreservedly, he would not have dwelt upon them afterwards, or have troubled himself to recal their circumstances. Here we trace his human weakness. Yet again we are reminded that it was the weakness of Cæsar; for the dreams were noble in their imagery, and Cæsarean (so to speak) in their tone of moral feeling. Thus, for example, the night before he was assassinated, he dreamt at intervals that he was soaring above the clouds on wings, and that he placed his hand within the right hand of Jove. It would seem that perhaps some obscure and half-formed image floated in his mind, of the eagle, as the king of birds; secondly, as the tutelary emblem under which his conquering legions had so often obeyed his voice; and, thirdly, as the bird of Jove.

To this triple relation of the bird his dream covertly appears to point. And, a singular coincidence appears between this dream and a little anecdote brought down to us, as having actually occurred in Rome about twenty-four hours before his death. A little bird, which by some is represented as a very small kind of sparrow, but which, both to the Greeks and the Romans, was known by a name implying a regal station (probably from the ambitious courage which at times prompted it to attack the hawk), was observed to direct its flight towards the senate-house, consecrated by Pompey, whilst a crowd of other birds were seen to hang upon its flight in close pursuit. What might be the object of the chase, whether the little king himself, or a sprig of laurel which he bore in his mouth, could not be determined. The whole train, pursuers and pursued, continued their flight towards Pompey's hall. Flight and pursuit were there alike arrested; the little king was overtaken by his enemies, who fell upon him as so many conspirators, and tore him limb from limb.

If this anecdote were reported to Cæsar, which is not at all improbable, considering the earnestness with which his friends laboured to dissuade him from his purpose of meeting the senate on the approaching Ides of March, it is very little to be doubted that it had a considerable effect upon his feelings, and that, in fact, his own dream grew out of the impression which it had made. This way of linking the two anecdotes, as cause and effect, would also bring a third anecdote under the same *nexus*. We are told that Calpurnia, the last wife of Cæsar, dreamed on the same night, and to the same ominous result. The circumstances of *her* dream are less striking, because less figurative; but on that account its import was less open to doubt: she dreamed, in fact, that after the roof of their mansion had

fallen in, her husband was stabbed in her bosom. Laying all these omens together, Cæsar would have been more or less than human had he continued utterly undepressed by them. And if so much superstition as even this implies, must be taken to argue some little weakness, on the other hand let it not be forgotten, that this very weakness does but the more illustrate the unusual force of mind, and the heroic will, which obstinately laid aside these *concurring* prefigurations of impending destruction; concurring, we say, amongst themselves—and concurring also with a prophecy of older date, which was totally independent of them all.

There is another and somewhat sublime story of the same class, which belongs to the most interesting moment of Cæsar's life, and those who are disposed to explain all such tales upon physiological principles, will find an easy solution of this, in particular, in the exhaustion of body, and the intense anxiety which must have debilitated even Cæsar under the whole circumstances of the case. On the ever memorable night when he had resolved to take the first step (and in such a case the first step, as regarded the power of retreating, was also the final step) which placed him in arms against the state, it happened that his head-quarters were at some distance from the little river Rubicon, which formed the boundary of his province. With his usual caution, that no news of his motions might run before himself, on this night Cæsar gave an entertainment to his friends, in the midst of which he slipped away unobserved, and with a small retinue proceeded through the woods to the point of the river at which he designed to cross. The night* was stormy, and by the violence of the wind all the

* It is an interesting circumstance in the habits of the ancient Romans, that their journeys were pursued very much in the night-

torches of his escort were blown out, so that the whole party lost their road, having probably at first intentionally deviated from the main route, and wandered about through the whole night, until the early dawn enabled them to recover their true course. The light was still grey and uncertain, as Cæsar and his retinue rode down upon the banks

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time, and by torchlight. Cicero, in one of his letters, speaks of passing through the towns of Italy by night, as a serviceable scheme for some political purpose, either of avoiding too much to publish his motions, or of evading the necessity (else perhaps not avoidable) of drawing out the party sentiments of the magistrates in the circumstances of honour or neglect with which they might choose to receive him. His words, however, imply that the practice was by no means an uncommon one. And, indeed, from some passages in writers of the Augustan era, it would seem that this custom was not confined to people of distinction, but was familiar to a class of travellers so low in rank as to be capable of abusing their opportunities of concealment for the infliction of wanton injury upon the woods and fences which bounded the margin of the high-road. Under the cloud of night and solitude, the mischief-loving traveller was often in the habit of applying his torch to the withered boughs of woods, or to artificial hedges; and extensive ravages by fire, such as now happen not unfrequently in the American woods (but generally from carelessness in scattering the glowing embers of a fire, or even the ashes of a pipe), were then occasionally the result of mere wantonness of mischief. Ovid accordingly notices, as one amongst the familiar images of daybreak, the half-burnt torch of the traveller; and, apparently, from the position which it holds in his description, where it is ranked with the most familiar of all circumstances in all countries—that of the rural labourer going out to his morning tasks—it must have been common indeed:

> "Semiustamque facem vigilatâ nocte viator
> Ponet; et ad solitum rusticus ibit opus."

This occurs in the *Fasti*;—elsewhere he notices it for its danger:

> "Ut facibus sepes ardent, cum forte viator
> Vel nimis admovit, vel jam sub luce reliquit."

He, however, we see, good-naturedly ascribes the danger to mere carelessness, in bringing the torch too near to the hedge, or tossing

of the fatal river—to cross which with arms in his hands, since the further bank lay within the territory of the Republic, *ipso facto* proclaimed any Roman a rebel and a traitor. No man, the firmest or the most obtuse, could be otherwise than deeply agitated, when looking down upon

it away at daybreak. But Varro, a more matter-of-fact observer, does not disguise the plain truth, that these disasters were often the product of pure malicious frolic. For instance, in recommending a certain kind of quickset fence, he insists upon it, as one of its advantages, that it will not readily ignite under the torch of the mischievous wayfarer: "Naturale sepimentum," says he, "quod obseri solet virgultis aut spinis, *prætereuntis lascivi non metuet facem.*" It is not easy to see the origin or advantage of this practice of nocturnal travelling (which must have considerably increased the hazards of a journey), excepting only in the heats of summer. It is probable, however, that men of high rank and public station may have introduced the practice by way of releasing corporate bodies in large towns from the burdensome ceremonies of public receptions; thus making a compromise between their own dignity and the convenience of the provincial public. Once introduced, and the arrangements upon the road for meeting the wants of travellers once adapted to such a practice, it would easily become universal. It is, however, very possible that mere horror of the heats of day-time may have been the original ground for it. The ancients appear to have shrunk from no hardship so trying and insufferable as that of heat. And in relation to that subject, it is interesting to observe the way in which the ordinary use of language has accommodated itself to that feeling. Our northern way of expressing effeminacy is derived chiefly from the hardships of cold. He that shrinks from the trials and rough experience of real life in any department, is described by the contemptuous prefix of *chimney-corner*, as if shrinking from the cold which he would meet on coming out into the open air amongst his fellow-men. Thus, a *chimney-corner* politician, for a mere speculator or unpractical dreamer. But the very same indolent habit of aërial speculation, which courts no test of real life and practice, is described by the ancients under the term *umbraticus*, or seeking the cool shade, and shrinking from the heat. Thus, an *umbraticus doctor* is one who has no practical solidity in his teaching. The fatigue and hardship of real life, in short, are represented by the ancients under the uniform image of heat, and by the moderns under that of cold.

this little brook—so insignificant in itself, but invested by law with a sanctity so awful, and so dire a consecration. The whole course of future history, and the fate of every nation, would necessarily be determined by the irretrievable act of the next half hour.

In these moments, and with this spectacle before him, and contemplating these immeasurable consequences consciously for the last time that could allow him a retreat,—impressed also by the solemnity and deep tranquillity of the silent dawn, whilst the exhaustion of his night wanderings predisposed him to nervous irritation,—Cæsar, we may be sure, was profoundly agitated. The whole elements of the scene were almost scenically disposed; the law of antagonism having perhaps never been employed with so much effect: the little quiet brook presenting a direct antithesis to its grand political character; and the innocent dawn, with its pure, untroubled repose, contrasting potently, to a man of any intellectual sensibility, with the long chaos of bloodshed, darkness, and anarchy, which was to take its rise from the apparently trifling acts of this one morning. So prepared, we need not much wonder at what followed. Cæsar was yet lingering on the hither bank, when suddenly, at a point not far distant from himself, an apparition was descried in a sitting posture, and holding in its hand what seemed a flute. This phantom was of unusual size, and of beauty more than human, so far as its lineaments could be traced in the early dawn. What is singular, however, in the story, on any hypothesis which would explain it out of Cæsar's individual condition, is, that others saw it as well as he; both pastoral labourers (who were present, probably, in the character of guides), and some of the sentinels stationed at the passage of the river. These men fancied even that a strain of music issued from this aërial flute. And some,

both of the shepherds and the Roman soldiers, who were bolder than the rest, advanced towards the figure. Amongst this party, it happened that there were a few Roman trumpeters. From one of these, the phantom, rising as they advanced nearer, suddenly caught a trumpet, and blowing through it a blast of superhuman strength, plunged into the Rubicon, passed to the other bank, and disappeared in the dusky twilight of the dawn. Upon which Cæsar exclaimed :—"It is finished—the die is cast—let us follow whither the guiding portents from Heaven, and the malice of our enemy, alike summon us to go." So saying, he crossed the river with impetuosity ; and, in a sudden rapture of passionate and vindictive ambition, placed himself and his retinue upon the Italian soil ; and, as if by inspiration from Heaven, in one moment involved himself and his followers in treason, raised the standard of revolt, put his foot upon the neck of the invincible republic which had humbled all the kings of the earth, and founded an empire which was to last for a thousand and half a thousand years. In what manner this spectral appearance was managed—whether Cæsar were its author, or its dupe—will remain unknown for ever. But undoubtedly this was the first time that the advanced guard of a victorious army was headed by an apparition ; and we may conjecture that it will be the last.*

* According to Suetonius, the circumstances of this memorable night were as follows :—As soon as the decisive intelligence was received, that the intrigues of his enemies had prevailed at Rome, and that the interposition of the popular magistrates (the tribunes) was set aside, Cæsar sent forward the troops, who were then at his head-quarters, but in as private a manner as possible. He himself, by way of masque (*per dissimulationem*), attended a public spectacle, gave an audience to an architect who wished to lay before him a plan for a school of gladiators which Cæsar designed to build, and finally pre-

In the mingled yarn of human life, tragedy is never far asunder from farce; and it is amusing to retrace in immediate succession to this incident of epic dignity, which has its only parallel, by the way, in the case of Vasco de Gama (according to the narrative of Camoens), when met and confronted by a sea phantom, whilst attempting to double the Cape of Storms (Cape of Good Hope), a ludicrous passage, in which one felicitous blunder did Cæsar a better service than all the truths which Greece and Rome could have furnished. In our own experience, we once witnessed a blunder about as gross. Lord Brougham, in his first electioneering contest with the Lowthers (A.D. 1818), upon some occasion where he was recriminating upon the other party, and complaining that stratagems, which *they* might practise with impunity, were denied to him and his, happened to point the moral of his complaint, by alleging the old adage, that one man might steal a horse with more hope of indulgence than another could look over the hedge. Whereupon, by benefit of the universal mishearing in the outermost ring of the audience, it became generally reported that Lord Lowther had once been engaged in an affair of horse stealing; and that he, Henry Brougham, could (had he pleased) have lodged an information against him, seeing that he was then looking over the hedge. And this charge naturally won the more credit, because it was notorious and past denying that his lordship was a capital horseman, fond of horses, and much connected with the turf. To this hour,

sented himself at a banquet, which was very numerously attended. From this, about sunset, he set forward in a carriage, drawn by mules, and with a small escort (*modico comitatu*). Losing his road, which was the most private he could find (*occultissimium*), he quitted his carriage and proceeded on foot. At dawn he met with a guide; after which followed the above incidents.

therefore, amongst some worthy shepherds and other "dalesmen" of bonny Westmoreland, it is a received article of their creed, and (as they justly observe in northern pronunciation), a *sham*ful thing to be told, that Lord Lowther was once a horse stealer, and that he escaped *lagging* by reason of Harry Brougham's pity for his tender years and hopeful looks. Not less was the blunder which, on the banks of the Rubicon, befriended Cæsar. Immediately after crossing, he harangued the troops whom he had sent forward, and others who there met him from the neighbouring garrison of Ariminium. The tribunes of the people, those great officers of the democracy, corresponding by some of their functions to our House of Commons, men personally, and by their position in the state, entirely in Cæsar's interest, and who, for his sake, had fled from home, there and then he produced to the soldiery; thus identified his cause, and, that of the soldiers, with the cause of the people of Rome and of Roman liberty; and perhaps with needless rhetoric attempted to conciliate those who were by a thousand ties and by claims innumerable, his own already; for never yet has it been found, that with the soldier, who, from youth upwards, passes his life in camps, could the duties or the interests of the citizen survive those stronger and more personal relations connecting him with his military superior. In the course of this harangue, Cæsar often raised his left hand with Demosthenic action, and once or twice he drew off the ring which every Roman gentleman—simply *as* such—wore as the inseparable adjunct and symbol of his rank. By this action he wished to give emphasis to the accompanying words, in which he protested, that, sooner than fail in satisfying and doing justice to any the least of those who heard him and followed his fortunes, he would be content to part with his own birthright, and to forego his dearest claims.

This was what he really said; but the outermost circle of his auditors, who rather saw his gestures than distinctly heard his words, carried off the notion (which they were careful everywhere to disperse amongst the legions afterwards associated with them in the same camps), that Cæsar had vowed never to lay down his arms until he had obtained for every man, the very meanest of those who heard him, the rank, privileges, and appointments of a Roman knight. Here was a piece of sovereign good luck. Had he really made such a promise, Cæsar might have found that he had laid himself under very embarrassing obligations; but, as the case stood, he had, through all his following campaigns, the total benefit of such a promise, and yet could always absolve himself from the embarrassing penalties of responsibility which it imposed, by appealing to the evidence of those who happened to stand in the first ranks of his audience. The blunder was gross and palpable; and yet, with the unreflecting and dull-witted soldier, it did him service greater than all the subtilities of all the schools could have accomplished, and a service which subsisted to the end of the war.

Great as Cæsar was by the benefit of his original nature, there can be no doubt that he, like others, owed something to circumstances; and perhaps, amongst those which were most favourable to the premature development of great self dependence, we must reckon the early death of his father. It is, or it is not, according to the nature of men, an advantage to be orphaned at an early age. Perhaps utter orphanage is rarely or never such: but to lose a father betimes, may, under appropriate circumstances, profit a strong mind greatly. To Cæsar it was a prodigious benefit that he lost his father when not muchmore than fifteen Perhaps it was an advantage also to his father that he died

thus early. Had he stayed a year longer, he might have seen himself despised, baffled, and made ridiculous. For where, let us ask, in any age, was the father capable of adequately sustaining that relation to the unique Caius Julius —to him, in the appropriate language of Shakspere,

> 'The foremost man of all this world?'

And, in this fine and Cæsarean line, 'this world' is to be understood not of the order of co existences merely, but also of the order of successions; he was the foremost man not only of his contemporaries, but also within his own intellectual class of men generally—of all that ever should come after him, or should sit on thrones under the denominations of Czars, Kesars, or Cæsars of the Bosphorus and the Danube; of all in every age that should inherit his supremacy of mind, or should subject to themselves the generations of ordinary men by qualities analogous to his. Of this infinite superiority some part must be ascribed to his early emancipation from paternal control. There are very many cases in which, simply from considerations of sex, a female cannot stand forward as the head of a family, or as its suitable representative. If they are even ladies paramount, and in situations of command, they are also women. The staff of authority does not annihilate their sex; and scruples of female delicacy interfere for ever to unnerve and emasculate in their hands the sceptre however otherwise potent. Hence we see, in noble families, the merest boys put forward to represent the family dignity, as fitter supporters of that burden than their mature mothers. And of Cæsar's mother, though little is recorded, and that little incidentally, this much at least we learn—that, if she looked down upon him with maternal pride and delight, she looked up to him with female ambition as the re-edifier of her husband's honours,—

looked with reverence as to a column of the Roman grandeur, and with fear and feminine anxieties as to one whose aspiring spirit carried him but too prematurely into the fields of adventurous strife. One slight and evanescent sketch of the relations which subsisted between Cæsar and his mother, caught from the wrecks of time, is preserved both by Plutarch and Suetonius. We see in the early dawn the young patrician standing upon the steps of his patrimonial portico, his mother with her arms wreathed about his neck, looking up to his noble countenance, sometimes drawing auguries of hope from features so fitted for command, sometimes boding an early blight to promises so dangerously magnificent. That she had something of her son's aspiring character, or that he presumed so much in a mother of his, we learn from the few words which survive of their conversation. He addressed to her no language that could tranquillize her fears. On the contrary, to any but a Roman mother his valedictory words, taken in connexion with the known determination of his character, were of a nature to consummate her depression, as they tended to confirm the very worst of her fears. He was then going to stand his chance in a popular electioneering contest for an office of the highest dignity, and to launch himself upon the storms of the Campus Martius. At that period, besides other and more ordinary dangers, the bands of gladiators, kept in the pay of the more ambitious or turbulent amongst the Roman nobles, gave a popular tone of ferocity and of personal risk to the course of such contests; and either to forestall the victory of an antagonist, or to avenge their own defeat, it was not at all impossible that a body of incensed competitors might intercept his final triumph by assassination. For this danger, however, he had no leisure in his thoughts of consolation; the sole danger which *he* contemplated, or supposed

his mother to contemplate, was the danger of defeat, and for that he reserved his consolations. He bade her fear nothing; for that his determination was to return with victory, and with the ensigns of the dignity he sought, or to return a corpse.

Early indeed did Cæsar's trials commence; and it is probable, that, had not the death of his father, by throwing him prematurely upon his own resources, prematurely developed the masculine features of his character, forcing him whilst yet a boy under the discipline of civil conflict and the yoke of practical life, even *his* energies might have been insufficient to sustain them. His age is not exactly ascertained, but it is past a doubt that he had not reached his twentieth year when he had the hardihood to engage in a struggle with Sylla, then Dictator, and exercising the immoderate powers of that office with the license and the severity which history has made so memorable. He had neither any distinct grounds of hope, nor any eminent example at that time, to countenance him in this struggle—which yet he pushed on in the most uncompromising style, and to the utmost verge of defiance. The subject of the contrast gives it a further interest. It was the youthful wife of the youthful Cæsar who stood under the shadow of the great Dictator's displeasure; not personally, but politically, on account of her connexions: and her it was, Cornelia, the daughter of a man who had been four times consul, that Cæsar was required to divorce: but he spurned the haughty mandate, and carried his determination to a triumphant issue, notwithstanding his life was at stake, and at one time saved only by shifting his place of concealment every night; and this young lady it was who afterwards became the mother of his only daughter. Both mother and daughter, it is remarkable, perished prematurely, and at

critical periods of Cæsar's life; for it is probable enough that these irreparable wounds to Cæsar's domestic affections threw him with more exclusiveness of devotion upon the fascinations of glory and ambition than might have happened under a happier condition of his private life. That Cæsar should have escaped destruction in this unequal contest with an enemy then wielding the whole thunders of the state, is somewhat surprising; and historians have sought their solution of the mystery in the powerful intercessions of the vestal virgins, and several others of high rank amongst the connexions of his great house. These may have done something; but it is due to Sylla, who had a sympathy with everything truly noble, to suppose him struck with powerful admiration for the audacity of the young patrician, standing out in such severe solitude among so many examples of timid concession; and that to this magnanimous feeling in the Dictator, much of the indulgence which he showed may have been really due. In fact, according to some accounts, it was not Sylla, but the creatures of Sylla (*adjutores*), who pursued Cæsar. We know, at all events, that Sylla formed a right estimate of Cæsar's character, and that, from the complexion of his conduct in this one instance, he drew that famous prophecy of his future destiny; bidding his friends beware of that slipshod boy, "for that in him lay couchant many a Marius." A grander testimony to the awe which Cæsar inspired, or from one who knew better the qualities of that Cyclopean man by whose scale he measured the patrician boy, cannot be imagined.

It is not our intention, or consistent with our plan, to pursue this great man through the whole circumstances of his romantic career; though it is certain that many parts of his life require investigation much keener than has ever been applied to them, and that many might be placed in a

new light. Indeed, the whole of this most momentous section of ancient history ought to be recomposed with the critical scepticism of a Niebuhr, and the same comprehensive collation resting, if possible, on the felicitous interpretation of authorities. In reality it is the hinge upon which turned the future destiny of the whole earth ; and having therefore a common relation to all modern nations whatsoever, should naturally have been cultivated with the zeal which belongs to a personal concern. In general, the anecdotes which express most vividly the grandeur of character in the first Cæsar, are those which illustrate his defiance of danger in extremity,—the prodigious energy and rapidity of his decisions and motions in the field (looking to which it was that Cicero called him a τερας or portentous revelation) ; the skill with which he penetrated the designs of his enemies, and the electric speed with which he met disasters with remedy and reparation ; or, where that was impossible, with relief ; the extraordinary presence of mind which he showed in turning adverse omens to his own advantage, as when, upon stumbling in coming on shore (which was esteemed a capital omen of evil), he transfigured as it were in one instant its whole meaning by exclaiming, "Thus, and by this contact with the earth, do I take possession of thee, O Africa !" in that way giving to an accident the semblance of a symbolic purpose. Equally conspicuous was the grandeur of fortitude with which he faced the whole extent of a calamity when palliation could do no good, "non negando, minuendove, sed insuper amplificando, *enuntiandoque ;*" as when, upon finding his soldiery alarmed at the approach of Juba, with forces really great, but exaggerated by their terrors, he addressed them in a military harangue to the following effect : —"Know that within a few days the king will come up

with us, bringing with him sixty thousand legionaries, thirty thousand cavalry, one hundred thousand light troops, besides three hundred elephants. Such being the case, let me hear no more of conjectures and opinions, for you have now my warrant for the fact, whose information is past doubting. Therefore, be satisfied; otherwise, I will put every man of you on board some crazy old fleet, and whistle you down the tide—no matter under what winds, no matter towards what shore." Finally, we might seek for *characteristic* anecdotes of Cæsar in his unexampled liberalities and contempt of money.*

Upon this last topic it is the just remark of Casaubon, that some instances of Cæsar's munificence have been thought apocryphal, or to rest upon false readings, simply from ignorance of the heroic scale upon which the Roman splendours of that age proceeded. A forum which Cæsar built out of the products of his last campaign, by way of a present to the Roman people, cost him—for the ground merely on which it stood—nearly eight hundred thousand pounds. To the *citizens* of Rome he presented, in one *congiary*, about two guineas and a half a head. To his army, in one *donation*, upon the termination of the civil war, he gave a sum which allowed about two hundred pounds a man to the infantry, and four hundred to the cavalry. It is true that the legionary troops were then much reduced by the sword of the enemy, and by the tre

* Middleton's Life of Cicero, which still continues to be the most readable digest of these affairs, is feeble and contradictory. He discovers that Cæsar was no general! But the single merit which M.'s work was supposed to possess, viz., the better and more critical arrangement of Cicero's Letters, in respect to their chronology, has of late years been detected as a robbery from the celebrated Bellenden, of James the First's time.

mendous hardships of their last campaigns. In this, however, he did perhaps no more than repay a debt. For it is an instance of military attachment, beyond all that Wallenstein or any commander, the most beloved amongst his troops, has ever experienced, that, on the breaking out of the civil war, not only did the centurions of every legion severally maintain a horse soldier, but even the privates volunteered to serve without pay, and (what might seem impossible) without their daily rations. This was accomplished by subscriptions amongst themselves, the more opulent undertaking for the maintenance of the needy. Their disinterested love for Cæsar appeared in another and more difficult illustration: it was a traditionary anecdote in Rome, that the majority of those amongst Cæsar's troops, who had the misfortune to fall into the enemy's hands, refused to accept their lives under the condition of serving against *him*.

In connexion with this subject of his extraordinary munificence, there is one aspect of Cæsar's life which has suffered much from the misrepresentations of historians, and that is—the vast pecuniary embarrassments under which he laboured, until the profits of war had turned the scale even more prodigiously in his favour. At one time of his life, when appointed to a foreign office, so numerous and so clamorous were his creditors, that he could not have left Rome on his public duties, had not Crassus come forward with assistance in money, or by guarantees, to the amount of nearly two hundred thousand pounds. And at another, he was accustomed to amuse himself with computing how much money it would require to make him worth exactly nothing (*i.e.*, simply to clear him of debts); this, by one account, amounted to upwards of two millions sterling. Now the error of historians has been—to represent these

debts as the original ground of his ambition and his revolutionary projects, as though the desperate condition of his private affairs had suggested a civil war to his calculations as the best or only mode of redressing it. Such a policy would have resembled the last desperate resource of an unprincipled gambler, who, on seeing his final game at chess, and the accumulated stakes depending upon it, all on the brink of irretrievable sacrifice, dexterously upsets the chess-board, or extinguishes the lights. But Julius, the one sole patriot of Rome, could find no advantage to his plans in darkness or in confusion. Honestly supported, he would have crushed the oligarchies of Rome by crushing in its lairs that venal and hunger-bitten democracy which made oligarchy and its machineries resistless. Cæsar's debts, far from being stimulants and exciting causes of his political ambition, stood in an inverse relation to the ambition; they were its results, and represented its natural costs, being contracted from first to last in the service of his political intrigues, for raising and maintaining a powerful body of partisans, both in Rome and elsewhere. Whosoever indeed will take the trouble to investigate the progress of Cæsar's ambition, from such materials as even yet remain, may satisfy himself that the scheme of revolutionizing the Republic, and placing himself at its head, was no growth of accident or circumstances; above all, that it did not arise upon any so petty and indirect a suggestion as that of his debts; but that his debts were in their very first origin purely ministerial to his wise, indispensable, and patriotic ambition; and that his revolutionary plans were at all periods of his life a direct and foremost object, but in no case bottomed upon casual impulses. In this there was not only patriotism, but in fact the one sole mode of patriotism which could have prospered, or could

have found a field of action. Chatter not, sublime reader, commonplaces of scoundrel moralists against ambition. In some cases ambition is a hopeful virtue; in others (as in the Rome of our resplendent Julius) ambition was the virtue by which any other could flourish. It had become evident to everybody that Rome, under its present constitution, must fall; and the sole question was—by whom? Even Pompey, not by nature of an aspiring turn, and prompted to his ambitious course undoubtedly by circumstances and the friends who besieged him, was in the habit of saying, 'Sylla potuit, ego non potero?' *Sylla found it possible, shall I find it not so?* Possible to do what? To overthrow the political system of the Republic. This had silently collapsed into an order of things so vicious—growing also so hopelessly worse, that all honest patriots invoked a purifying revolution, even though bought at the heavy price of a tyranny, rather than face the chaos of murderous distractions to which the tide of feuds and frenzies was violently tending. Such a revolution at such a price was not less Pompey's object than Cæsar's. In a case, therefore, where no benefit of choice was allowed to Rome as respected the thing, but only as respected the person, Cæsar had the same right to enter the arena in the character of combatant as could belong to any one of his rivals. And that he *did* enter that arena constructively, and by secret design, from his very earliest manhood, may be gathered from this—that he suffered no openings towards a revolution, provided they had any hope in them, to escape his participation. It is familiarly known that he was engaged pretty deeply in the conspiracy of Catiline,* and that he incurred considerable

* Suetonius, speaking of this conspiracy, says, that Cæsar was *nominatus inter socios Catilinæ*, which has been erroneously understood to mean that he was *talked of* as an accomplice; but in fact,

risk on that occasion; but it is less known that he was a party to at least two other conspiracies. There was even a fourth, meditated by Crassus, which Cæsar so far encouraged as to undertake a journey to Rome from a very distant quarter, merely with a view to such chances as it might offer to him; but as it did not, upon examination, seem to him a very promising scheme, he judged it best to look coldly upon it, or not to embark in it by any personal co-operation. Upon these and other facts we build our inference—that the scheme of a revolution was the one great purpose of Cæsar, from his first entrance upon public life. Nor does it appear that he cared much by whom it was undertaken, provided only there seemed to be any sufficient resources for carrying it through, and for sustaining the first collision with the regular forces of the existing oligarchies, taking or not taking the shape of triumvirates. He relied, it seems, on his own personal superiority for raising him to the head of affairs eventually, let who would take the nominal lead at first. To the same result, it will be found, tended the vast stream of Cæsar's liberalities. From the senator downwards to the lowest *fæx Romuli*, he had a hired body of dependants, both in and out of Rome, equal in numbers to a nation. In the provinces, and in distant kingdoms, he pursued the same schemes. Everywhere he had a body of mercenary partisans; kings even are known to have taken his pay. And it is remarkable that even in his character of commander-in-chief, where the number of legions allowed to him for the accomplishment of his Gaulish mission raised him for a number of years above all fear of coercion or control, he persevered steadily

as Casaubon first pointed out, *nominatus* is a technical term of the Roman jurisprudence, and means that he was formally denounced.

in the same plan of providing for the distant day when he might need assistance, not *from* the state, but *against* the state. For amongst the private anecdotes which came to light under the researches made into his history after his death, was this—that, soon after his first entrance upon his government in Gaul, he had raised, equipped, disciplined, and maintained, from his own private funds, a legion amounting, possibly, to six or seven thousand men, who were bound by no sacrament of military obedience to the state, nor owed feälty to any auspices except those of Cæsar. This legion, from the fashion of their crested helmets, which resembled the heads of a small aspiring bird, received the popular name of the *Alauda* (or Lark) legion. And very singular it was that Cato, or Marcellus, or some amongst those enemies of Cæsar, who watched his conduct during the period of his Gaulish command with the vigilance of rancorous malice, should not have come to the knowledge of this fact; in which case we may be sure that it would have been denounced to the senate.

Such, then, for its purpose and its uniform motive, was the sagacious munificence of Cæsar. Apart from this motive, and considered in and for itself, and simply with a reference to the splendid forms which it often assumed, this munificence would furnish the materials for a volume. The public entertainments of Cæsar, his spectacles and shows, his naumachiæ, and the pomps of his unrivalled triumphs (the closing triumphs of the Republic), were severally the finest of their kind which had then been brought forward. Sea-fights were exhibited upon the grandest scale, according to every known variety of nautical equipment and mode of conflict, upon a vast lake formed artificially for that express purpose. Mimic land-fights were conducted, in which all the circumstances of real war were so faithfully rehearsed,

that even elephants "indorsed with towers,"* twenty on each side, took part in the combat. Dramas were represented in every known language (*per omnium linguarum histriones*). And hence [that is, from the conciliatory feeling thus expressed towards the various tribes of foreigners resident in Rome] some have derived an explanation of what is else a mysterious circumstance amongst the ceremonial observances at Cæsar's funeral—that all people of foreign nations then residing at Rome, distinguished themselves by the conspicuous share which they took in the public mourning; and that, beyond all other foreigners, the Jews for night after night kept watch and ward about the emperor's grave. Never before, according to traditions which lasted through several generations in Rome, had there been so vast a conflux of the human race congregated to any one centre, on any one attraction of business or of pleasure, as to Rome on occasion of these triumphal spectacles exhibited by Cæsar.

In our days, the greatest occasional gatherings of the human race are in India, especially at the great fair of the *Hurdwar* on the Ganges in northern Hindustan: a confluence of some millions is sometimes seen at that spot, brought together under the mixed influences of devotion and commercial business, but very soon dispersed as rapidly as they had been convoked. Some such spectacle of nations crowding upon nations, and some such Babylonian confusion of dresses, complexions, languages, and jargons, was then witnessed at Rome. Accommodations within doors, and under roofs of houses, or roofs of temples, was altogether impossible. Myriads encamped along the streets, and along the high-roads, fields, or gardens. Myriads lay stretched on the

* "*Elephants indorsed with towers:*"—See Milton's gorgeous description of the Parthian warfare in the *Paradise Regained*

ground, without even the slight protection of tents, in a vast circuit about the city. Multitudes of men, even senators, and others of the highest rank, were trampled to death in the crowds. And the whole family of man might seem at that time to be converged at the bidding of the dead Dictator. But these, or any other themes connected with the public life of Cæsar, we notice only in those circumstances which have been overlooked, or partially represented by historians. Let us now, in conclusion, bring forward, from the obscurity in which they have hitherto lurked, the anecdotes which describe the habits of his private life, his tastes, and personal peculiarities.

In person, he was tall,* fair, gracile, and of limbs distinguished for their elegant proportions. His eyes were black and piercing. These circumstances continued to be long remembered, and no doubt were constantly recalled to the eyes of all persons in the imperial palaces, by pictures, busts, and statues; for we find the same description of his personal appearance three centuries afterwards, in a work of the Emperor Julian's. He was a most accomplished horseman, and a master (*peritissimus*) in the use of arms. But notwithstanding his skill and horsemanship, it seems that, when he accompanied his army on marches, he walked oftener than he rode; no doubt, with a view to the benefit of his example, and to express that sympathy with his soldiers

* "*Tall*:"—Whereas, to show the lawless caprices upon which French writers have endeavoured to found a brief notoriety, some contributor to the memoirs of *L'Académie des Inscriptions*, expressly asserts, without a vestige of countenance from any authority whatsoever, that Cæsar was "several feet high," but being "invited" to circumstantiate, replied, "five feet nothing;" but this being French measure, would give him (if we rightly remember the French scale), about five times three-fourths of an inch more Nonsense. Suetonius, who stood so near to the Julian generation, is guarantee for his *proceritas*.

which gained him their hearts so entirely. On other occasions, when travelling apart from his army, he seems more frequently to have ridden in a carriage than on horseback. His purpose, in this preference, must have been with a view to the transport of luggage. The carriage which he generally used was a *rheda*, a sort of gig, or rather curricle, for it was a *four*-wheeled carriage, and adapted (as we find from the imperial regulations for the public carriages, &c.) to the conveyance of about half a ton. The mere personal baggage which Cæsar carried with him, was probably considerable; for he was a man of elegant habits, and in all parts of his life sedulously attentive to elegance of personal appearance. The length of journeys which he accomplished within a given time, appears even to us at this day, and might well therefore appear to his contemporaries, truly astonishing. A distance of one hundred miles was no extraordinary day's journey for him in a *rheda*, such as we have described it. So refined were his habits, and so constant his demand for the luxurious accommodations of polished life, as it then existed in Rome, that he is said to have carried with him, as indispensable parts of his personal baggage, the little ivory lozenges, squares and circles or ovals, with other costly materials wanted for the tessellated flooring of his tent. Habits such as these will easily account for his travelling in a carriage rather than on horseback.

The courtesy and obliging disposition of Cæsar were notorious; and both were illustrated in some anecdotes which survived for generations in Rome. Dining on one occasion as an invited guest, at a table where the servants had inadvertently, for salad-oil, furnished some sort of coarse lamp-oil, Cæsar would not allow the rest of the company to point out the mistake to their host, for fear of shocking him too much by exposing what might have been

construed into inhospitality. At another time, whilst halting at a little *cabaret*, when one of his retinue was suddenly taken ill, Cæsar resigned to his use the sole bed which the house afforded. Incidents, as trifling as these, express the urbanity of Cæsar's nature; and, hence, one is the more surprised to find the alienation of the Senate charged, in no trifling degree, upon a gross and most culpable failure in point of courtesy. Cæsar; it is alleged—but might we presume to call upon antiquity for its authority—neglected to rise from his seat, on their approaching him with an address of congratulation. It is said, and we can believe it, that he gave deeper offence by this one defect in a matter of ceremonial observance, than by all his substantial attacks upon their privileges. What we find it difficult to believe is not that result from that offence—this is no more than we should all anticipate—not *that*, but the possibility of the offence itself, from one so little arrogant as Cæsar, and so entirely a man of the world. He was told of the disgust which he had given, and we are bound to believe his apology, in which he charged it upon sickness, that would not at the moment allow him to maintain a standing attitude. Certainly the whole tenor of his life was not courteous only, but kind; and, to his enemies, merciful in a degree which implied so much more magnanimity than men in general could understand, that by many it was put down to the account of weakness.

Weakness, however, there was none in Caius Cæsar; and, that there might be none, it was fortunate that conspiracy should have cut him off in the full vigour of his faculties, in the very meridian of his glory, and on the brink of completing a series of gigantic achievements. Amongst these are numbered—a digest of the entire body of laws, even then become unwieldy and oppressive; the establishment of

vast and comprehensive public libraries, Greek as well as Latin; the chastisement of Dacia (that needed a cow-hiding for insolence as much as Affghanistan from us in 1840); the conquest of Parthia; and the cutting a ship canal through the Isthmus of Corinth. The reformation of the calendar he had already accomplished. And of all his projects it may be said, that they were equally patriotic in their purpose, and colossal in their proportions.

As an orator, Cæsar's merit was so eminent, that, according to the general belief, had he found time to cultivate this department of civil exertion, the received supremacy of Cicero would have been made questionable, or the honours would have been divided. Cicero himself was of that opinion; and on different occasions applied the epithet *Splendidus* to Cæsar, as though in some exclusive sense, or with some peculiar emphasis, due to him. His taste was much simpler, chaster, and less inclined to the *florid* and Asiatic, than that of Cicero. So far he would, in that condition of the Roman culture and feeling, have been less acceptable to the public; but, on the other hand, he would have compensated this disadvantage by much more of natural and Demosthenic fervour.

In literature, the merits of Cæsar are familiar to most readers. Under the modest title of *Commentaries*, he meant to offer the records of his Gallic and British campaigns, simply as notes, or memoranda, afterwards to be worked up by regular historians; but, as Cicero observes, their merit was such in the eyes of the discerning, that all judicious writers shrank from the attempt to alter them. In another instance of his literary labours, he showed a very just sense of true dignity. Rightly conceiving that everything patriotic was dignified, and that to illustrate or polish his native language, was a service of real and paramount patriotism,

he composed a work on the grammar and orthoepy of the Latin language. Cicero and himself were the only Romans of distinction in that age, who applied themselves with true patriotism to the task of purifying and ennobling their mother tongue. Both were aware of a transcendent value in the Grecian literature as it then stood; but that splendour did not depress their hopes of raising their own to something of the same level. As respected the natural wealth of the two languages, it was the private opinion of Cicero, that the Latin had the advantage; and if Cæsar did not accompany him to that length, which, perhaps, under some limitations he ought to have done, he yet felt that it was but the more necessary to draw forth any special or exceptional advantage which it really had.*

Was Cæsar, upon the whole, the greatest of men? We restrict the question, of course, to the classes of men great in *action*; great by the extent of their influence over their social contemporaries: great by throwing open avenues to extended powers that previously had been closed; great by making obstacles once vast to become trivial; or prizes that once were trivial to be glorified by expansion. I (said Augustus Cæsar) found Rome built of brick; but I left it built of marble. Well, my man, we reply, for a wondrously little chap, you did what in Westmoreland they call a good *darrock* (day's work); and if *navvies* had been

* Cæsar had the merit of being the first person to propose the daily publication of the acts and votes of the Senate. So far, *i.e.*, to the extent of laying a large foundation, Cæsar was the *Father of Newspapers* In the form of public and official despatches, he made also some useful innovations; and it may be mentioned. for the curiosity of the incident, that the cipher which he used in his correspondence, was the following very simple one:—For every letter of the alphabet he substituted that which stood third removed from it in the order of succession. Thus, for A, he used D; for D, G, and so on.

wanted in those days, you should have had our vote to a certainty. But Caius Julius, even under such a limitation of the comparison, did a thing as much transcending this—as it was greater to project Rome across the Alps and the Pyrenees—expanding the grand Republic into crowning provinces of 1. France (*Gallia*), 2. Belgium, 3. Holland (*Batavia*), 4. England (*Britannia*), 5. Savoy (*Allobroges*), 6. Switzerland (*Helvetia*), 7. Spain (*Hispania*)—than to decorate a street or to found an amphitheatre. Dr. Beattie once observed, that if that question as to the greatest man in action upon the rolls of History, were left to be collected from the suffrages already expressed in books, and scattered throughout the literature of all nations, the scale would be found to have turned prodigiously in Cæsar's favour, as against any single competitor; and there is no doubt whatsoever, that even amongst his own countrymen, and his own contemporaries, the same verdict would have been returned, had it been collected upon the famous principle of Themistocles, that *he* should be reputed the first, whom the greatest number of rival voices had pronounced to be the second.

CHAPTER II.

The situation of the Second Cæsar at the crisis of the great Dictator's assassination was so hazardous and delicate, as to confer interest upon a character not otherwise attractive. To many, we know it was positively repulsive,* and in the very highest degree. In particular, it is recorded of Sir William Jones, that he regarded this emperor with feelings of abhorrence so *personal* and deadly, as to refuse him his customary titular honours whenever he had occasion to mention him by name. Yet it was the whole Roman people that conferred upon him his title of *Augustus*. But Sir William ascribing no force to the acts of a people who had sunk so low as to exult in their chains, and to decorate with honours the very instruments of their own vassalage, would not recognise this popular creation, and spoke of him always by his family name of Octavius. The flattery of the populace, by the way, must, in this instance, have been doubly acceptable to the emperor, first, for what it gave, and secondly, for what it concealed. Of his grand-uncle, the first Cæsar, a tradition survives—that of all the distinctions created in his favour, either by the Senate or the people, he put most value upon the laurel crown which was voted to him after his last campaigns, a beautiful and conspicuous memorial to every eye of his great public acts, and at the same time an overshadowing veil of his one sole personal defect. This laurel diadem at once proclaimed his grand career of victory, and concealed his baldness—a defect which was more mortifying to a Roman than it would be to

ourselves, from the peculiar theory which then prevailed as to its probable origin. A gratitude of the same mixed quality must naturally have been felt by the Second Cæsar for his title of *Augustus*, which, whilst it illustrated his public character by the highest expression of majesty,* set apart and sequestrated to public functions, had also the agreeable effect of withdrawing from the general remembrance his obscure descent. For the Octavian house [*gens*] had in neither of its branches risen to any great splendour of civic distinction ; and in his own branch to little or none. But for their alliance with a Julian family (by intermarriage with the niece of Cæsar), the Octavian family was a cipher in Rome. The same titular decoration, therefore, so offensive to the celebrated English Whig, was, in the eyes of Augustus, at once a trophy of public merit, a monument of public gratitude, and an effectual obliteration of his own natal obscurity.

But, if merely odious to men of Sir William's principles, to others the character of Augustus, in relation to the circumstances which surrounded him, was not without its appropriate interest. He was summoned in early youth, and without warning, to face a crisis of tremendous hazard, being at the same time himself a man of no very great constitutional courage ; perhaps he was even a coward. And this we say without meaning to adopt as gospel truths all the party reproaches of Antony. Certainly he was utterly unfurnished by nature with those endowments which *seemed* to be indispensable in a successor to the power of the great Dictator. But exactly in these deficiencies, and in certain accidents unfavourable to his ambition, lay his security. He had been adopted by his grand-uncle, Julius. That

* Yes, of majesty, but majesty combined with sanctity

adoption made him, to all intents and purposes of law, the son* of his great patron; and doubtless, in a short time, this adoption would have been applied to more extensive uses, and as a station of vantage for introducing him to the public favour. From the inheritance of the Julian estates and family honours, he would have been trained to mount, as from a stepping-stone, to the inheritance of the Julian power and political station; and the Roman people would have been familiarized to regard him in that character. But, luckily for himself, the finishing, or ceremonial acts, were yet wanting in this process—the political heirship was inchoate and imperfect. Tacitly understood, indeed, it was; but, had it been formally proposed and ratified, there cannot be a doubt that the young Octavius would have been pointed out to the vengeance of the patriots, and included in the scheme of the conspirators, as a fellow-victim with his nominal father; and would have been cut off too suddenly to benefit by that reaction of popular feeling which saved the partisans of the Dictator, by separating the conspirators, and obliging them, without loss of time, to look to their own safety. It was by this fortunate accident that the young heir and adopted son of the first Cæsar not only escaped assassination, but was enabled to postpone indefinitely the final and military struggle for the vacant seat of empire, and in the meantime to maintain a coequal rank with the leaders in the state, by those arts and resources in which he was superior to his competitors. His place in the

* "*The son*."—This is a fact which we should do well to remember more seriously than we have ever done in the cases of Indian princes claiming under this title. The miscreant Nana Sahib to all appearance was really ill-used originally by us; was he not really and truly the child by *adoption* of the Peishwah? Let us recollect that one of the Scipios, received for such by the whole Roman world, was really an *Emilian*, and a Scipio only by adoption.

favour of Caius Julius was of power sufficient to give him a share in any triumvirate which could be formed; but, wanting the formality of a regular introduction to the people, and the ratification of their acceptance, that place was not sufficient to raise him permanently into the perilous and invidious station of absolute supremacy which he afterwards occupied. The *felicity* of Augustus was often vaunted by antiquity (with whom success was not so much a test of merit as itself a merit of the highest quality), and in no instance was this felicity more conspicuous than in the first act of his entrance upon the political scene. No doubt his friends and enemies alike thought of him, at the moment of Cæsar's assassination, as we now think of a young man heir-elect to some person of immense wealth, cut off by a sudden death before he has had time to ratify a will in execution of his purposes. Yet in fact the case was far otherwise. Brought forward distinctly as the successor of Cæsar's power, had he even, by some favourable accident of absence from Rome, or otherwise, escaped being involved in that great man's fate, he would at all events have been thrown upon the instant necessity of defending his supreme station by arms. To have left it unasserted, when once solemnly created in his favour by a reversionary title, would have been deliberately to resign it. This would have been a confession of weakness liable to no disguise, and ruinous to any subsequent pretensions. Yet, without preparation of means, with no development of resources nor growth of circumstances, an appeal to arms would, in his case, have been of very doubtful issue. His true weapons, for a long period, were the arts of vigilance and dissimulation. Cultivating these, he was enabled to prepare for a contest which, undertaken prematurely, must have ruined him, and to raise himself to a station of even military pre-eminence

to those who naturally, and by circumstances, were originally every way superior to himself.

The qualities in which he really excelled, the gifts of intrigue, patience, long-suffering, dissimulation, and tortuous fraud, were thus brought into play, and allowed their full value. Such qualities had every chance of prevailing in the long-run, against the noble carelessness and the impetuosity of the passionate Antony—and they *did* prevail. Always on the watch to lay hold of those opportunities which the generous negligence of his rival was but too frequently throwing in his way—unless by the sudden reverses of war and the accidents of battle, which as much as possible, and as long as possible, he declined—there could be little question in any man's mind, that eventually He would win his way to a solitary throne, by a policy so full of caution and subtlety. He was sure to risk nothing which could be had on easier terms; and nothing, unless for a great overbalance of gain in prospect: to lose nothing which he had once gained; and in no case to miss an advantage, or sacrifice an opportunity, by any consideration of generosity. No modern insurance office but would have guaranteed an event depending upon the final success of Augustus, on terms far below those which they must in prudence have exacted from the fiery and adventurous Antony. Each was an ideal in his own class. But Augustus, having finally triumphed, has met with more than justice from succeeding ages. Even Lord Bacon says, that, by comparison with Julius Cæsar, he was '*non tam impar quam dispar*,' surely a most extravagant encomium, applied to whomsoever. On the other hand, Antony, amongst the most signal misfortunes of his life, might number it, that Cicero, the great dispenser of immortality, in whose hands (more perhaps than in any one man's of any age) were the vials of good and evil fame, should happen to have been his bit-

ter and persevering enemy. It is, however, some balance to this, that Shakspere had a just conception of the original grandeur which lay beneath that wild tempestuous nature presented by Antony to the eye of the undiscriminating world. It is to the honour of Shakspere, that he should have been able to discern the true colouring of this most original character, under the smoke and tarnish of antiquity. It is no less to the honour of the great triumvir, that a strength of colouring should survive in his character, capable of baffling the wrongs and ravages of time; capable of forcing its way by mere weight of metal through a tract of sixteen hundred and odd years to the notice of one immortal eye that could read its true lineaments and proportions. Neither is it to be thought strange that a character should have been misunderstood and falsely appreciated for nearly two thousand years. It happens not uncommonly, especially amongst an unimaginative people like the Romans, that the characters of men are ciphers and enigmas to their own age, and are first read and interpreted by a far-distant posterity. Stars are supposed to exist, whose light has been travelling for many thousands of years without having yet reached our system; and the eyes are yet unborn upon which their earliest rays will fall. Men like Mark Antony, with minds of chaotic composition—light conflicting with darkness, proportions of colossal grandeur disfigured by unsymmetrical arrangement, the angelic in close neighbourhood with the brutal—are first read in their true meaning by an age learned in the philosophy of the human heart. Of this philosophy the Romans had, by the necessities of education and domestic discipline not less than by original constitution of mind, the very narrowest visual range. In no literature whatsoever are so few tolerable notices to be found of any great truths in Psychology. Nor could this have been otherwise amongst a people who tried every-

thing by the standard of *social* value; never seeking for a canon of excellence in man considered abstractedly in and for himself, and as having an independent value, but always and exclusively in man as a gregarious being, and designed for social uses and functions. Not man in his own separate nature, but man in his relations to other men, was the station from which the Roman speculators took up their philosophy of human nature. Tried by such standard, Mark Antony would be found wanting. As a citizen, he was irretrievably licentious, and therefore there needed not the bitter personal feud which circumstances had generated between them, to account for the *acharnement* with which Cicero pursued him. Had Antony been his friend even, or his near kinsman, Cicero must still have been his public enemy. And not merely for his vices; for even the grander features of his character, his towering ambition, his magnanimity, and the fascinations of his popular qualities, —were all, in the circumstances of those times, and in *his* position, of a tendency dangerously uncivic.

So remarkable was the opposition, at all points, between the second Cæsar and his rival, that whereas Antony even in his virtues seemed dangerous to the state, Octavius gave a civic colouring to his most indifferent actions, and, with a Machiavelian policy, observed a scrupulous regard to the forms of the Republic, after every fragment of the republican institutions, the privileges of the republican magistrates, and the functions of the great popular officers, had been absorbed into his own autocracy. Even in the most prosperous days of the Roman State, when the democratic forces balanced, and were balanced by, those of the aristocracy, it was far from being a general or common praise, that a man was of a civic turn of mind, *animo civili*. Yet this praise did Augustus affect, and in reality attain, at a time when the very object of all civic feeling was absolutely extinct;

so much are men governed by words. Suetonius assures us,' that many evidences were current even to his times of this popular disposition (*civilitas*) in the emperor; and that it survived every èxperience of servile adulation in the Roman populace, and all the effects of long familiarity with irresponsible power in himself. Such a moderation of feeling, we are almost obligėd to consider as a genuine and unaffected expression of his real nature; for, as an artifice of policy, it had soon lost its uses. And it is worthy of notice, that with the army he laid aside those popular manners as soon as possible, addressing them haughtily as *milites*, not (according to his earlier practice) by the conciliatory title of *commilitones*. It concerned his own security, to be jealous of encroachments on his power. But of his rank, and the honours which accompanied it, he seems to have been uniformly careless. Thus, he would never leave a town or enter it by daylight, unless some higher rule of policy obliged him to do so; by which means he evaded a ceremonial of public honour which was burdensome to all the parties concerned in it. Sometimes however, we find that men, careless of honours in their own persons, are glad to see them settling upon their family and immediate connexion.' But here again Augustus showed the sincerity of his moderation. For upon one occasion, when the whole audience in the Roman theatre had risen upon the entrance of his two adopted sons, at that time not seventeen years old, he was highly displeased, and even thought it necessary to publish his displeasure in a separate edict. It is another, and a striking illustration of his humility, that he willingly accepted of public appointments, and sedulously discharged the duties attached to them, in conjunction with colleagues who had been chosen with little regard to his personal partialities. In the debates of the Senate, he showed the same equanimity; suffering himself

patiently to be contradicted, and even with circumstances of studied incivility. In the public elections, he gave his vote like any private citizen ; and, when he happened to be a candidate himself, he canvassed the electors with the same earnestness of personal application, as any other candidate with the least possible title to public favour from present power or past services. But, perhaps by no expressions of his civic spirit did Augustus so much conciliate men's minds, as by the readiness with which he participated in their social pleasures, and by the uniform severity with which he refused to apply his influence in any way that could disturb the pure administration of justice. The Roman juries (*judices* they were called) were very corrupt; and easily swayed to an unconscientious verdict, by the appearance in court of any great man on behalf of one of the parties interested : nor was such an interference with the course of private justice anyways injurious to the great man's character. The wrong which he promoted did but the more forcibly proclaim the warmth and fidelity of his friendships. So much the more generally was the uprightness of the emperor appreciated, who would neither tamper with justice himself, nor countenance any motion in that direction, though it were to serve his very dearest friend, either by his personal presence, or by the use of his name. And, as if it had been a trifle merely to forbear, and to show his regard to justice in this negative way, he even allowed himself to be summoned as a witness on trials, and showed no anger when his own evidence was overborne by stronger on the other side. This disinterested love of justice, and an integrity so rare in the great men of Rome, could not but command the reverence of the people. But their affection, doubtless, was more conciliated by the freedom with which the emperor accepted invitations from all

quarters, and shared continually in the festal pleasures of his subjects. This practice, however, he discontinued, or narrowed, as he advanced in years. Suetonius, who, as a true anecdote-monger, would solve everything, and account for every change by some definite incident, charges this alteration in the emperor's condescensions upon one particular party at a wedding feast, where the crowd incommoded him much by their pressure and heat. But, doubtless, it happened to Augustus as to other men; his spirits failed, and his powers of supporting fatigue or bustle, as years stole upon him. Changes, coming by insensible steps, and not willingly acknowledged, for some time escape notice; until some sudden shock reminds a man forcibly to do that which he has long meditated in an irresolute way. The marriage banquet may have been the particular occasion from which Augustus stepped into the habits of old age, but certainly not the cause of so entire a revolution in his mode of living.

It might seem to throw some doubt, if not upon the fact, yet at least upon the sincerity, of his *civism*, that undoubtedly Augustus cultivated his kingly connexions with considerable anxiety. It may have been upon motives merely political that he kept at Rome the children of nearly all the kings then known as allies or vassals of the Roman power: a curious fact, and not generally known. In his own palace were reared a number of youthful princes; and they were educated jointly with his own children. It is also upon record, that in many instances the fathers of these princes spontaneously repaired to Rome, and there assuming the Roman dress—as an expression of reverence to the majesty of the omnipotent state—did personal "suit and service" (*more clientum*) to Augustus. It is an anecdote of not less curiosity, that a whole "college" of kings sub-

scribed money for a temple at Athens, to be dedicated in the name of Augustus. Throughout his life, indeed, this emperor paid a marked attention to all royal houses then known to Rome, as occupying the thrones upon the vast margin of the empire. It is true that in part this attention might be interpreted as given politically to so many lieutenants, wielding a remote or inaccessible power for the benefit of Rome. And the children of these kings might be regarded as hostages, ostensibly entertained for the sake of education, but really as pledges for their parents' fidelity, and also with a view to the large reversionary advantages which might be expected to arise upon the basis of so early and affectionate a connexion. But it is not the less true, that, at one period of his life, Augustus did certainly meditate some closer personal connexion with the royal families of the earth. He speculated, undoubtedly, on a marriage for himself with some barbarous princess, and at one time designed his daughter Julia as a wife for Cotiso, the king of the Getæ. Superstition perhaps disturbed the one scheme, and policy the other. He married, as is well known, for his final wife, and the partner of his life through its whole triumphant stage, Livia Drusilla; compelling her husband, Tiberius Nero, to divorce her, notwithstanding she was then six months advanced in pregnancy. With this lady, who was distinguished for her beauty, it is certain that he was deeply in love; and that might be sufficient to account for the marriage. It is equally certain, however, upon the concurring evidence of independent writers, that this connexion had an oracular sanction—not to say, suggestion; a circumstance *which was long remembered*, and was afterwards noticed by the Christian poet Prudentius:

"Idque Dûem sortes et Apollinis antra dederunt
Consilium: nunquam meliùs nam cædere tædas
Responsum est, quàm cum prægnans nova nupta jugatur."

His daughter Julia had been promised by turns, and always upon reasons of state, to a whole muster-roll of suitors; first of all, to a son of Mark Antony; secondly, to the barbarous king; thirdly, to her first cousin—that Marcellus, the son of Octavia, only sister to Augustus, whose early death, in the midst of great expectations, Virgil has introduced into the vision of Roman grandeurs as yet unborn, which Æneas beholds in the shades; fourthly, she was promised (and this time the promise was kept) to the fortunate soldier, Agrippa, whose low birth was not permitted to obscure his military merits. By him she had a family of children, upon whom, if upon any in this world, the wrath of Providence seems to have rested; for, excepting one, and in spite of all the favours that earth and heaven could unite to shower upon them, all came to an early, a violent, and an infamous end. Fifthly, upon the death of Agrippa, and again upon motives of policy, and in atrocious contempt of all the ties that nature and the human heart and human laws have hallowed, she was promised (if that word may be applied to the violent obtrusion upon a man's bed of one who was doubly a curse—first, for what she brought, and, secondly, for what she took away), and given to Tiberius, the future emperor. Upon the whole, as far as we can at this day make out the connexion of a man's acts and purposes, which, even to his own age, were never entirely cleared up, it is probable that, so long as the triumvirate survived, and so long as the condition of Roman power or intrigues, and the distribution of Roman influence, were such as to leave a possibility that any new triumvirate should arise—so long Augustus was

secretly meditating a retreat for himself at some barbarous court, against any sudden reverse of fortune, by means of a domestic connexion, which should give him the claim of a kinsman. Such a court, as against a sudden emergency, might prove a tower of strength, however unable to make head against the collective power of Rome: such a court might offer a momentary front of resistance to any single partisan who should attain a brief ascendency; or, at the worst, as a merely defensive power, might offer a retreat, strong by its distance, or by its difficult access; or might be available as a means of delay for recovering from some else fatal defeat. It is certain that Augustus viewed Egypt with jealousy as a province, which might be turned to account in some such way by any aspiring insurgent. And it must have often struck him as a remarkable circumstance, which by good luck had turned out entirely to the advantage of his own family, but which might as readily have had an opposite result, that the three decisive battles of Pharsalia, of Thapsus, and of Munda, in which the empire of the world was three times over staked on the issue, had severally brought upon the defeated leaders a ruin which was total, absolute, and final. One hour had seen the whole fabric of their aspiring fortunes fuming away in smoke; and no resource was left to them but either in suicide (which, accordingly, even Cæsar had meditated at one crisis in the battle of Munda, when it seemed to be going against him), or in the mercy of the victor.

That a victor in a hundred fights should in his hundred-and-first,* as in his first, risk the loss of that particular

* "The painful warrior, famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd."
SHAKSPERE'S *Sonnets*.

battle, is inseparable from the condition of man, and the uncertainty of human means; but that the loss of this one battle should be equally fatal and irrecoverable with the loss of his first, that it should leave him with means no more cemented, and resources no better matured for retarding his fall, and throwing a long succession of hindrances in the way of his conqueror, argues some essential defect of system. Under our modern policy, military power—though it may be the growth of one man's life—soon takes root; a succession of campaigns is required for its extirpation; and it revolves backwards to its final extinction through all the stages by which originally it grew. On the Roman system this was mainly impossible from the solitariness of the Roman power; co-rival nations who might balance the victorious party, there were absolutely none; and all the underlings hastened to make their peace, whilst peace was yet open to them, on the known terms of absolute treachery to their former master, and instant surrender to the victor of the hour. For this capital defect in the tenure of Roman power, no matter in whose hands deposited, there was no absolute remedy. Many a sleepless night, during the perilous game which he played with Antony, must have familiarized Octavius with that view of the risk, which to some extent was inseparable from his position as the leader in such a struggle carried on in such an empire. In this dilemma, struck with the extreme necessity of applying some palliation to the case, we have no doubt that Augustus would devise the scheme of laying some distant king under such obligations to fidelity as would suffice to stand the first shock of misfortune. Such a person would have power enough, of a direct military kind, to face the storm at its outbreak. He would have power of another kind in his distance. He would be sustained by the courage of hope, as a kinsman

having a contingent interest in a kinsman's prosperity. And, finally, he would be sustained by the courage of despair, as one who never could expect to be trusted by the opposite party. In the worst case, such a prince would always offer a breathing time and a respite to his friends, were it only by his remoteness, and if not the *means* of rallying, yet at least the *time* for rallying, more especially as the escape to his frontier would be easy to one who had long forecast it. We can hardly doubt that Augustus meditated such schemes; that he laid them aside only as his power began to cement and to knit together after the battle of Actium; and that the memory and the prudential tradition of this plan survived in the imperial family so long as itself survived. Amongst other anecdotes of the same tendency, two are recorded of Nero, the emperor in whom expired the line of the original Cæsars, which strengthen us in a belief of what is otherwise in itself so probable. Nero, in his first distractions, upon receiving the fatal tidings of the revolt in Gaul, when reviewing all possible plans of escape from the impending danger, thought at intervals of throwing himself on the protection of the barbarous King Vologesus. And twenty years afterwards, when the Pseudo-Nero appeared, he found a strenuous champion and protector in the king of the Parthians. Possibly, had an opportunity offered for searching the Parthian chancery, some treaty would have been found binding the kings of Parthia, from the age of Augustus through some generations downwards, in requital of services there specified, or of treasures lodged, to secure a perpetual asylum to the posterity of the Julian family.

The cruelties of Augustus were perhaps equal in atrocity to any which are recorded; and the equivocal apology for those acts (one which might as well be used to aggravate as to palliate the case) is, that they were not prompted by

a ferocious nature, but by calculating policy. He once actually slaughtered upon an altar a large body of his prisoners; and such was the contempt with which he was regarded by some of that number, that, when led out to death, they saluted their other proscriber, Antony, with military honours, acknowledging merit even in an enemy; in words beautiful and memorable they paid their homage —*Morituri te salutamus*, but Augustus they passed with scornful silence, or with loud reproaches. Too certainly no man has ever contended for empire with unsullied conscience, or laid pure hands upon the ark of so magnificent a prize. Every friend to Augustus must have wished that the twelve years of his struggle might for ever be blotted out from human remembrance. During the forty-two years of his prosperity and his triumph, being above fear, he showed his natural or prudential lenity.

That prosperity, in a public sense, has been rarely equalled; but far different was his fate, and memorable was the contrast, within the circuit of his own family. This lord of the universe groaned as often as the ladies of his house, his daughter and grand-daughter, were mentioned. The shame which he felt on their account, led him even to unnatural designs, and to wishes not less so: for at one time he entertained a plan for putting the elder Julia to death; and at another, upon hearing that Phœbe (one of the female slaves in his household) had hanged herself, he exclaimed audibly,—"Would that I had been the father of a Phœbe!" It must, however, be granted, that in this dark episode or parenthesis of his public life he behaved with very little of his usual discretion. In the first paroxysms of his rage, on discovering his daughter's criminal conduct, he made a communication of the whole to the Senate. That body could do nothing in such a matter, either by act or by suggestion; and

in a short time, as everybody could have foreseen, he himself repented of his own deficient self-command. Upon the whole, it cannot be denied, that, according to the remark of Jeremy Taylor, of all the men signally decorated by history, Augustus Cæsar is that one who exemplifies, in the most emphatic forms, the mixed tenor of human life, and the equitable distribution, even on this earth, of good and evil fortune. He made himself master of the world, and against the most formidable competitors; his power was absolute, from the rising to the setting sun; and yet in his own house, where the peasant who does the humblest chares, claims an undisputed authority, he was baffled, dishonoured, and made ridiculous. He was loved by nobody; and if, at the moment of his death, he desired his friends to dismiss him from this world by the common expression of scenical applause (*vos plaudite!*) in that valedictory injunction he expressed inadvertently the true value of his own long life, which, in strict candour, may be pronounced one continued series of histrionic efforts; of dissimulation therefore, even if usefully directed; yes, little man, one huge *étalage* of excellent acting, adapted to ends essentially selfish.

CHAPTER III.

THE three next emperors, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, were the last princes who had any connexion by blood * with the Julian house. In Nero, the sixth emperor, expired the last of the Cæsars, who was such in reality. These three were also the first in that long line of monsters, who, at different times, under the title of Cæsars, dishonoured humanity more memorably than was possible, except in the cases of those (if any such can be named) who have abused the same enormous powers in times of the same civility, and in defiance of the same general illumination. But for them it is a fact, that some crimes, which now stain

* And this was entirely by the female side. The family descent of the first six Cæsars is so intricate, that it is rarely understood accurately; so that it may be well to state it briefly. Augustus was grand-nephew to Julius Cæsar, being the son of Cæsar's sister's daughter Augustus was also, by adoption, the *son* of Julius He himself had one child only, viz. the infamous Julia, who was brought him by his second wife Scribonia; and through this Julia it was that the three princes, who succeeded to Tiberius, claimed relationship to Augustus. On that emperor's third and last marriage, viz. with Livia, he adopted the two sons whom she had borne to her divorced husband. These two noblemen, who stood in no degree of consanguinity whatever to Augustus, were Tiberius and Drusus. Tiberius, who succeeded his adopted father, Augustus, as emperor, left no children; but Drusus, the younger of the two brothers, by his marriage with the younger Antonia (daughter of Mark Antony), had the celebrated Germanicus, and Claudius, afterwards emperor. Germanicus, though adopted by his uncle Tiberius, and destined to the empire, died prematurely.

the page of history, would have been accounted fabulous dreams of impure romancers, taxing their extravagant imaginations to create combinations of wickedness more hideous than civilized men would tolerate, and more unnatural than the human heart could conceive. Let us, by way of example, take a short chapter from the diabolic life of Caligula: In what way did he treat his nearest and tenderest female connexions? His mother had been tortured and murdered by another tyrant almost as fiendish as himself. She was happily removed from his cruelty. Disdaining, however, to acknowledge any connexion with the blood of so obscure a man as Agrippa, he publicly gave out that his mother was indeed the daughter of Julia, but by an incestuous commerce with her father Augustus. His three sisters he debauched. One died, and her he canonized; the other two he prostituted to the basest of his own attendants. Of his wives, it would be hard to say whether they were first sought and won with more circumstances of injury and outrage, or dismissed with more insult and levity. The one

But, like Banquo, though he wore no crown, he left descendants who did. For, by his marriage with Agrippina, a daughter of Julia's by Agrippa (and therefore grand-daughter of Augustus), he had a large family, of whom one son became the Emperor Caligula; and one of the daughters, Agrippina the younger, by her marriage with a Roman nobleman, became the mother of the Emperor Nero. Hence it appears that Tiberius was uncle to Claudius, Claudius was uncle to Caligula, Caligula was uncle to Nero; a worshipful succession of uncles. But it is observable, that Nero and Caligula stood in another degree of consanguinity to each other through their grandmothers, who were both daughters of Mark Antony the triumvir; for the elder Antonia married the grandfather of Nero; the younger Antonia (as we have stated above) married Drusus, the grandfather of Caligula: and again, by these two ladies, they were connected not only with each other, but also with the Julian house, for the two Antonias were daughters of Mark Antony by Octavia, sister to Augustus.

whom he treated best, and with most profession of love, and who commonly rode by his side, equipped with spear and shield, to his military inspections and reviews of the soldiery, though not particularly beautiful, was exhibited to his friends at banquets in a state of absolute nudity. His motive for treating her with so much kindness, was probably that she brought him a daughter; and her he acknowledged as his own child, from the early brutality with which she attacked the eyes and cheeks of other infants who were presented to her as play-fellows. Hence it would appear that he was aware of his own ferocity, and treated it as a jest. The levity, indeed, which he mingled with his worst and most inhuman acts, and the slightness of the occasions upon which he delighted to hang his most memorable atrocities, aggravated their impression at the time, and must have contributed greatly to sharpen the sword of vengeance. His palace happened to be contiguous to the circus. Some seats, it seems, were open indiscriminately to the public; consequently, the only way in which they could be appropriated, was by taking possession of them as early as the midnight preceding any great exhibitions. Once, when it happened that his sleep was disturbed by such an occasion, he sent in soldiers to eject them; and with orders so rigorous, as it appeared by the event, that in this singular tumult, twenty Roman knights, and as many mothers of families, were cudgelled to death upon the spot, to say nothing of what the reporter calls "innumeram turbam ceteram."

But this is a trifle to another anecdote reported by the same authority:—On some occasion it happened that a dearth prevailed, either generally of cattle, or of such cattle as were used for feeding the wild beasts reserved for the bloody exhibitions of the amphitheatre. Food could be had, and perhaps at no very exorbitant price, but on terms

somewhat higher than the ordinary market price. A slight excuse served with Caligula for acts the most monstrous. Instantly repairing to the public jails, he caused all the prisoners to pass in review before him (*custodiarum seriem recognovit*), and then pointing to two bald-headed men, he ordered that the whole file of intermediate persons should be marched off to the dens of the wild beasts: "Tell them off," said he, "from the bald man to the bald man." Yet these were prisoners committed, not for punishment, but trial. Nor [had it been otherwise] were the charges against them equal, but running through every graduation of guilt. But the *elogia*, or records of their commitment, he would not so much as look at. With such inordinate capacities for cruelty, we cannot wonder that he should in his common conversation have deplored the tameness and insipidity of his own times and reign, as likely to be marked by no wide-spreading calamity. "Augustus," said he, "was happy; ah, yes, he was fortunate, for in his reign occurred the slaughter of Varus and his legions. Tiberius was happy; for in his occurred that glorious fall of the great amphitheatre at Fidenæ. But for me—alas! alas!" And then he would pray earnestly for fire or slaughter, pestilence or famine. Famine, indeed, was to some extent in his own power; and, accordingly, as far as his courage would carry him, he did occasionally try that mode of tragedy upon the people of Rome, by shutting up the public granaries against them. As he blended his mirth and a truculent sense of the humorous with his cruelties, we cannot wonder that he should soon blend his cruelties with his ordinary festivities, and that his daily banquets would soon become insipid without them. Hence he required a daily supply of executions in his own halls and banqueting-rooms; nor was a dinner held to be complete without such a dessert. Artists

were sought out who had dexterity and strength enough to do what Lucan somewhere calls *ensem rotare*, that is, to cut off a human head with one whirl of the sword. Even this became insipid, as wanting one main element of misery to the sufferer, and an indispensable condiment to the jaded palate of the connoisseur, viz., a lingering duration. As a pleasant variety, therefore, the tormentors were introduced with their various instruments of torture; and many a dismal tragedy in that mode of human suffering was conducted in the sacred presence during the emperor's hours of amiable relaxation.

The result of these horrid indulgences was exactly what we might suppose, that even such scenes ceased to irritate the languid appetite, and yet that without them life was not endurable. Jaded and exhausted as the sense of pleasure had become in Caligula, still it could be roused into any activity by nothing short of these murderous luxuries. Hence, it seems that he was continually tampering and dallying with the thought of murder; and like the old Parisian jeweller Cardillac, in Louis XIV.'s time, who was stung with a perpetual lust for murdering the possessors of fine diamonds— not so much for the value of the prize (of which he never hoped to make any use), as from an unconquerable desire of precipitating himself into the difficulties and hazards of the murder—Caligula never failed to experience (and sometimes even to acknowledge) a secret temptation to any murder which seemed either more than usually abominable, or more than usually difficult. Thus, when the two consuls were seated at his table, he burst out into sudden and profuse laughter; and, upon their courteously requesting to know what witty and admirable conceit might be the occasion of the imperial mirth, he frankly owned to them, and doubtless he did not improve their appetites by

this confession, that in fact he was laughing, and that he could not *but* laugh (and then the monster laughed immoderately again), at the pleasant thought of seeing them both headless, and that with so little trouble to himself (*uno suo nutu*), he could have both their throats cut. No doubt he was continually balancing the arguments for and against such little *escapades ;* nor had any person a reason for security in the extraordinary obligations, whether of hospitality or of religious vows, which seemed to lay him under some peculiar restraints in that case above all others ; for such circumstances of peculiarity, by which the murder would be stamped with unusual atrocity, were but the more likely to make its fascinations irresistible. Hence he dallied with the thoughts of murdering her whom he loved best, and indeed exclusively—his wife Cæsonia ; and whilst fondling her, and toying playfully with her polished throat, he was distracted (as he half insinuated to her) between the desire of caressing it, which might be often repeated, and that of cutting it, which could be gratified but once.

Nero (for as to Claudius, he came too late to the throne to indulge any propensities of this nature with so little discretion) was but a variety of the same species. He also was an amateur, and an enthusiastic amateur of murder. But as this taste, in the most ingenious hands, is limited and monotonous in its modes of manifestation, it would be tedious to run through the long Suetonian roll-call of his peccadilloes in this way. One only we shall cite, to illustrate the amorous delight with which he pursued any murder which happened to be seasoned highly to his taste by enormous atrocity, and by almost unconquerable difficulty. It would really be pleasant, were it not for the revolting consideration of the persons

concerned, and their relation to each other, to watch the tortuous pursuit of the hunter, and the doubles of the game, in this obstinate chase. For certain reasons of state, as Nero attempted to persuade himself, but in reality because no other crime had the same attractions of unnatural horror about it, he resolved to murder his mother Agrippina. This being settled, the next thing was to arrange the mode and the tools. Naturally enough, according to the custom then prevalent in Rome, he first attempted the thing by poison. The poison failed: for Agrippina, anticipating tricks of this kind, had armed her constitution against them, like Mithridates; and daily took potent antidotes and prophylactics. Or else (which is more probable) the emperor's agent in such purposes, fearing his sudden repentance and remorse on first hearing of his mother's death, or possibly even witnessing her agonies, had composed a poison of inferior strength. This had certainly occurred in the case of Britannicus, who had thrown off with ease the first dose administered to him by Nero. Upon which he had summoned to his presence the woman employed in the affair, and compelling her by threats to mingle a more powerful potion in his own presence, had tried it successively upon different animals, until he was satisfied with its effects; after which, immediately inviting Britannicus to a banquet, he had finally despatched him. On Agrippina, however, no changes in the poison, whether of kind or strength, had any effect; so that, after various trials, this mode of murder was abandoned, and the emperor addressed himself to other plans. The first of these was some curious mechanical device, by which a false ceiling was to have been suspended by bolts above her bed; and in the middle of the night, the bolt being suddenly drawn, a vast weight would have descended with a ruinous destruction to all below. This

scheme, however, taking air from the indiscretion of some amongst the accomplices, reached the ears of Agrippina; upon which the old lady looked about her too sharply to leave much hope in that scheme: so *that* also was abandoned. Next, he conceived the idea of an artificial ship, which, at the touch of a few springs, might fall to pieces in deep water. Such a ship was prepared, and stationed at a suitable point. But the main difficulty remained, which was to persuade the old lady to go on board. Not that she knew in this case *who* had been the ship-builder, for that would have ruined all; but it seems that she took it ill to be hunted in this murderous spirit, and was out of humour with her son; besides, that any proposal coming from him, though previously indifferent to her, would have instantly become suspected. To meet this difficulty, a sort of reconciliation was proposed, and a very affectionate message sent, which had the effect of throwing Agrippina off her guard, and seduced her to Baiæ for the purpose of joining the emperor's party at a great banquet held in commemoration of a solemn festival. She came by water in a sort of light frigate, and was to return in the same way. Meantime Nero tampered with the commander of her vessel, and prevailed upon him to wreck it. What was to be done? The great lady was anxious to return to Rome, and no proper conveyance was at hand. Suddenly it was suggested, as if by chance, that a ship of the emperor's, new and properly equipped, was moored at a neighbouring station. This was readily accepted by Agrippina: the emperor accompanied her to the place of embarkation, took a most tender leave of her, and saw her set sail. It was necessary that the vessel should get into deep water before the experiment could be made; and with the utmost agitation this pious son awaited news of the result. Suddenly

a messenger rushed breathless into his presence, and horrified him by the joyful information that his august mother had met with an alarming accident; but, by the blessing of Heaven, had escaped safe and sound, and was now on her road to mingle congratulations with her affectionate son. The ship, it seems, had done its office; the mechanism had played admirably; but who can provide for everything? The old lady, it turned out, could swim like a duck; and the whole result had been to refresh her with a little sea-bathing. Here was worshipful intelligence. Could any man's temper be expected to stand such continued sieges? Money, and trouble, and infinite contrivance, wasted upon one old woman, who absolutely would not, upon any terms, be murdered! Provoking it certainly was: and of a man like Nero it could not be expected that he should any longer dissemble his disgust, or put up with such repeated affronts. He rushed upon his simple congratulating friend, swore that he had come to murder him, and as nobody could have suborned him but Agrippina, he ordered her off to instant execution. And, unquestionably, if people will not be murdered quietly and in a civil way, they must expect that such forbearance is not to continue for ever; and obviously have themselves only to blame for any harshness or violence which they may have rendered necessary.

It is singular, and shocking, at the same time, to mention, that, for this atrocity, Nero did absolutely receive solemn congratulations from all orders of men. With such evidences of base servility in the public mind, and of the utter corruption which they had sustained in their elementary feelings, it is the less astonishing that he should have made other experiments upon the public patience, which seem expressly designed to try how much it would support.

Whether he were really the author of the desolating fire which consumed Rome for six* days and seven nights, and drove the mass of the people into the tombs and sepulchres for shelter, is yet a matter of some doubt. But one great presumption against it, founded on its desperate imprudence, as attacking the people in their primary comforts, is considerably weakened by the enormous servility of the Romans in the case just stated : they who could volunteer congratulations to a son for butchering his mother (no matter on what pretended suspicions) might reasonably be supposed incapable of any resistance which required courage even in a case of self-defence, or of just revenge. The direct reasons, however, for implicating him in this affair, seem at present insufficient. He was displeased, it seems, with the irregularity and unsightliness of the antique buildings, and also with the streets, as too narrow and winding (*angustiis flexurisque vicorum*). But in this he did but express what was no doubt the common judgment of all his contemporaries, who had seen the beautiful cities of Greece and Asia Minor. The Rome of that time was in many parts built of wood ; and there is much probability that it must have been a *picturesque* city, and in parts almost grotesque. But it is remarkable, and a fact which we have nowhere seen noticed, that the ancients, whether Greeks or Romans, had no eye for the picturesque ; nay, that it was a sense utterly unawakened amongst them ; and that the very conception of the picturesque, as of a thing distinct from the beautiful, is not once alluded to through the whole course of ancient literature, nor would it have been intelligible to any ancient critic ; so that, whatever attraction for the eye

* But a memorial stone, in its inscription, makes the time longer : "Quando urbs per novem dies arsit Neronianis temporibus."

might exist in the Rome of that day, there is little doubt that it was of a kind to be felt only by modern spectators. Mere dissatisfaction with its external appearance, which must have been a pretty general sentiment, argued, therefore, no necessary purpose of destroying it. Certainly it would be a weightier ground of suspicion, if it were really true, that some of his agents were detected on the premises of different senators in the act of applying combustibles to their mansions. But this story wears a very fabulous air. For why resort to the private dwellings of great men where any intruder was sure of attracting notice, when the same effect, and with the same deadly results, might have been attained quietly and secretly in so many of the humble Roman *cœnacula*, *i.e.*, garrets?

The great loss on this memorable occasion was in the heraldic and ancestral honours of the city. Historic Rome then went to wreck for ever. Then perished the *domus priscorum ducum hostilibus adhuc spoliis adornatæ;* the "rostral" palace; the mansion of the Pompeys; the Blenheims and the Strathfieldsayes of the Scipios, the Marcelli, the Paulii, and the Cæsars; then perished the aged trophies from Carthage and from Gaul; and, in short, as the historian sums up the lamentable desolation, "*quidquid visendum atque memorabile ex antiquitate duraverat.*" And this of itself might lead one to suspect the emperor's hand as the original agent; for by no one act was it possible so entirely and so suddenly to wean the people from their old republican recollections, and in one week to obliterate the memorials of their popular forces, and their trophies of many ages. The old people of Rome were gone; their characteristic dress even was gone; for already in the time of Augustus they had laid aside the *toga*, and assumed

the cheaper and scantier *pœnula*, so that the eye sought in vain for Virgil's

"Romanos rerum dominos gentemque *togatam*."

Why, then, after all the constituents of Roman grandeur had passed away, should their historical trophies survive, recalling to them the scenes of departed heroism, in which they had no personal property, and suggesting to them vain hopes, which for them were never to be other than chimeras? Even in that sense, therefore, and as a great depository of heart-stirring historical remembrances, Rome was profitably destroyed; and in any other sense, whether for health or for the conveniences of polished life, or for architectural magnificence, there never was a doubt that the Roman people gained infinitely by this conflagration. For, like London, it arose from its ashes with a splendour proportioned to its vast expansion of wealth and population; and marble took the place of wood. For the moment, however, this event must have been felt by the people as an overwhelming calamity. And it serves to illustrate the passive endurance and timidity of the popular temper, and to what extent it might be provoked with impunity, that in this state of general irritation and effervescence, Nero absolutely forbade them to meddle with the ruins of their own dwellings—taking that charge upon himself, with a view to the vast wealth which he anticipated from sifting the rubbish. And, as if that mode of plunder were not sufficient, he exacted compulsory contributions to the rebuilding of the city so indiscriminately as to press heavily upon all men's finances; and thus, in the public account which universally imputed the fire to him, he was viewed as a twofold robber, who sought to heal one calamity by the infliction of another and a greater.

The monotony of wickedness and outrage becomes at length fatiguing to the coarsest and most callous senses; and the historian, even, who caters professedly for the taste which feeds upon the monstrous and the hyperbolical, is glad at length to escape from the long evolution of his insane atrocities, to the striking and truly scenical catastrophe of retribution which overtook them, and avenged the wrongs of an insulted world. Perhaps history contains no more impressive scenes than those in which the justice of Providence at length arrested the monstrous career of Nero.

It was at Naples, and, by a remarkable fatality, on the very anniversary of his mother's murder, that he received the first intelligence of the revolt in Gaul, under the Propraetor Vindex. This news for about a week he treated with levity; and, like Henry VII. of England, who was nettled, not so much at being proclaimed a rebel, as because he was described under the slighting denomination of "one Henry Tidder, or Tudor," he complained bitterly that Vindex had mentioned him by his family name of Ænobarbus, rather than his assumed one of Nero. But much more keenly he resented the insulting description of himself as a "miserable harper," appealing to all about him whether they had ever known a better, and offering to stake the truth of all the other charges against himself upon the accuracy of this in particular. So little even in this instance was he alive to the true point of the insult; not thinking it any disgrace that a Roman emperor should be chiefly known to the world in the character of a harper, but only if he should happen to be a bad one. Even in those days, however, imperfect as were the means of travelling, rebellion moved somewhat too rapidly to allow any long interval of security so light-minded as this. One courier followed upon the heels of another, until he felt the necessity for leaving

Naples; and he returned to Rome, as the historian says, *prætrepidus*; by which word, however, according to its genuine classical acceptation, we apprehend is not meant that he was highly alarmed, but only that he was in a great hurry. That he was not yet under any real alarm (for he trusted in certain prophecies, which, like those made to the Scottish tyrant, "kept the promise to the ear, but broke it to the sense") is pretty evident from his conduct on reaching the capital. For, without any appeal to the Senate or the people, but sending out a few summonses to some men of rank, he held a hasty council, which he speedily dismissed, and occupied the rest of the day with experiments on certain musical instruments of recent invention, in which the keys were moved by hydraulic machineries. He had come to Rome, it appeared, merely from a sense of decorum.

Suddenly, however, arrived news, which fell upon him with the shock of a thunderbolt, that the revolt had extended to the Spanish provinces, and was headed by Galba. He fainted upon hearing this: and falling to the ground, lay for a long time lifeless, as it seemed, and speechless. Upon coming to himself again, he tore his robe, struck his forehead, and exclaimed aloud that for him all was over. In this agony of mind, it strikes across the utter darkness of the scene with the sense of a sudden and cheering flash, recalling to us the possible goodness and fidelity of human nature—when we read that one humble creature adhered to him, and, according to her slender means, gave him consolation during these trying moments; this was the woman who had tended his infant years, and she now recalled to his remembrance such instances of former princes in adversity, as appeared fitted to sustain his drooping spirits. It seems, however, that, according to the general course of violent emotions, the rebound of high spirits was in propor-

tion to his first despondency. He omitted nothing of his usual luxury or self-indulgence, and even found spirits for going *incognito* to the theatre, where he took sufficient interest in the public performances, to send a message to a favourite actor. At times, even in this hopeless situation, his native ferocity returned upon him, and he was believed to have framed plans for removing all his enemies at once —the leaders of the rebellion, by appointing successors to their offices, and secretly sending assassins to despatch their persons; the senate, by poison at a great banquet; the Gaulish provinces, by delivering them up for pillage to the army; the city, by again setting it on fire, whilst, at the same time, a vast number of wild beasts was to have been turned loose upon the unarmed populace, for the double purpose of destroying them, and of distracting their attention from the fire. But, as the mood of his frenzy changed, these sanguinary schemes were abandoned (not, however, under any feelings of remorse, but from mere despair of effecting them), and on the same day, *but after a luxurious dinner*, the imperial monster grew bland and pathetic in his ideas; he would proceed to the rebellious army; he would present himself unarmed to their view; and would recall them to their duty by the mere spectacle of his tears. Upon the pathos with which he would weep he was resolved to rely entirely. And having received the guilty to his mercy without distinction, upon the following day he would unite *his* joy with *their* joy, and would chant hymns of victory (*epinicia*), "which, by the way," said he, suddenly, breaking off to his favourite pursuits, "it is necessary that I should immediately compose." This caprice vanished like the rest; and he made an effort to enlist the slaves and citizens into his service, and to raise by extortion a large military chest. But in the midst of these vacillating pur-

poses fresh tidings surprised him; other armies had revolted, and the rebellion was spreading contagiously. This consummation of his alarms reached him at dinner; and the expressions of his angry fears took even a scenical air; he tore the despatches, upset the table, and dashed to pieces upon the ground two crystal beakers, which, from the sculptures that adorned them, had a high value as works of art, even in the *Aurea Domus*.

He now took steps for flight; and, sending forward commissioners to prepare the fleet at Ostia for his reception, he tampered with such officers of the army as were at hand, to prevail upon them to accompany his retreat. But all showed themselves indisposed to such schemes, and some flatly refused. Upon which he turned to other counsels; sometimes meditating a flight to the King of Parthia, or even to throw himself on the mercy of Galba; sometimes inclining rather to the plan of venturing into the forum in mourning apparel, begging pardon for all past offences, and, as a last resource, entreating that he might receive the appointment of Egyptian prefect. This plan, however, he hesitated to adopt, from some apprehension that he should be torn to pieces on his road to the forum; and, at all events, he concluded to postpone it to the following day. Meantime events were now hurrying to their catastrophe, which for ever anticipated that intention. His hours were numbered, and the closing scene was at hand.

Record there is not amongst libraries of man, libraries that stretch into infinity like the armies of Xerxes, of a human agony distilling itself through moments and pulses of intermitting misery so cruel, and into such depths of darkness descending from such glittering heights. In the middle of the night he was aroused from slumber with the intelligence that the military guard, who did duty at the

palace, had all quitted their posts. Upon this the unhappy prince leaped from his couch, never again to taste the luxury of sleep, and despatched messengers to his friends. No answers were returned; and upon that he went personally with a small retinue to their hotels. But he found their doors everywhere closed; and all his importunities could not avail to extort an answer. Sadly and slowly he returned to his own bed-chamber; but there again he found fresh instances of desertion, which had occurred during his short absence; the pages of his bed-chamber had fled, carrying with them the coverlids of the imperial bed, which were probably inwrought with gold thread, and even a golden box, in which Nero had on the preceding day deposited poison prepared against the last extremity. Wounded to the heart by this general perfidy, and by some special case, no doubt, of ingratitude, such as would probably enough be signalized in the flight of his personal favourites, he called for a gladiator of the household to come and despatch him. But none appearing—"What!" said he, "have I neither friend nor foe?" This pretty little epigrammatic query we suspect to be the manufacture of the rhetorician, in after days, embroidering the case at his leisure. For the honour of human nature, we rejoice that one *man* in Rome was capable of gratitude and stern fidelity. Else the poor nurse would have placed our rascally sex at a discount. And so saying, or perhaps *not* saying, he ran towards the Tiber, with the purpose of drowning himself. But that paroxysm, like all the rest, proved transient; and he expressed a wish for some hiding-place, or momentary asylum, in which he might collect his unsettled spirits, and fortify his wandering resolution. Such a retreat was offered to him by his *libertus* Phaon, in his own rural villa, about four miles distant from Rome.

This offer was accepted ; and the emperor, without further preparation than that of throwing over his person a short mantle of a dusky hue, and enveloping his head and face in a handkerchief, mounted his horse, and left Rome with four attendants. It was still night, but probably verging towards the early dawn ; and even at that hour the imperial party met some travellers on their way to Rome (coming up, no doubt,* on law business), who said, as they passed, "These men, doubtless, are in chase of Nero." Two other incidents, of an interesting nature, are recorded of this short but memorable ride ; at one point of the road, the shouts of the soldiery assailed their ears from the neighbouring encampment of Galba. They were probably then getting under arms for their final march to take possession of the palace. At another point, an accident occurred of a more ominous kind, but so natural and so well circumstantiated, that it serves to verify the whole narrative ; a dead body was lying on the road, at which the emperor's horse started so violently as nearly to dismount his rider ; the difficulty of the moment compelled the emperor to drop the hand which held up the handkerchief , so that with the suddenness of a theatrical surprise his features were exposed. Only for a moment was this exposure ; but a moment was sufficient. Precisely at this critical moment it happened that an old half-pay officer passed, recognised the emperor, and saluted him. Perhaps it was with some purpose of applying a remedy to this unfortunate rencontre, that the party dismounted at a point

* At this early hour, witnesses, sureties, &c., and all concerned in the law courts, came up to Rome from villas, country towns, &c. But no ordinary call existed to summon travellers in the opposite direction ; which accounts for the comment of the travellers on the errand of Nero and his attendants

where several roads met, and turned their horses adrift, to graze at will amongst the furze and brambles. Their own purpose was, to make their way to the back of the villa; but, to accomplish *that*, it was necessary that they should first cross a plantation of reeds, from the peculiar marshy state of which they found themselves obliged to cover successively each space upon which they trode with parts of their dress, in order to gain any supportable footing. In this way, and contending with such hardships, they reached at length the postern side of the villa. Here we must suppose that there was no regular ingress; for, after waiting until an entrance was pierced, it seems that the emperor could avail himself of this entrance in no more dignified posture, than by creeping through the hole on his hands and feet (*quadrupes per angustias receptus*).

Now, then, after such anxiety, alarm, and hardship, Nero had reached a quiet rural asylum. But for the unfortunate concurrence of his horse's alarm with the passing of the soldier, he might perhaps have counted on the respite of a day or two in this noiseless and obscure abode. But what a habitation for him who was yet ruler of the world in the eye of law, and even *de facto* was so, had any fatal accident befallen his aged competitor! The room in which (as the one most removed from notice and suspicion) he had secreted himself, was a cella, or little sleeping-closet of a slave, furnished only with a miserable pallet and a coarse rug. Here lay the founder and possessor of the Golden House, too happy if he might hope for the peaceable possession even of this miserable crypt. But that, he knew too well, was impossible. Could he ever have believed it possible? A rival pretender to the empire was like the plague of fire—as dangerous in the shape of a single spark left unextinguished, as in that of a prosperous conflagration.

But a few brief sands yet remained to run in the emperor's hour-glass; much variety of degradation or suffering seemed scarcely within the possibilities of his situation, or within the compass of the time. Yet, as though Providence had decreed that his humiliation should pass through every shape and stage, and speak by every expression which came home to his understanding, or was intelligible to his senses, even in these few moments he was attacked by hunger and thirst. No other bread could be obtained (or, perhaps, if the emperor's presence were concealed from the household, it was not safe to raise suspicion by calling for better) than that which was ordinarily given to slaves, coarse, black, and, to a palate so luxurious, doubtless disgusting. This accordingly he rejected; but a little tepid water he drank. After which, with the haste of one who fears that he may be prematurely interrupted, but otherwise, with all the reluctance which we may imagine, and which his streaming tears proclaimed, he addressed himself to the last labour in which he supposed himself to have any interest on this earth—that of digging a grave. Measuring a space adjusted to the proportions of his person, he inquired anxiously for any loose fragments of marble, such as might suffice to line it. He requested also to be furnished with wood and water, as the materials for the last sepulchral rites. And these labours were accompanied, or continually interrupted by tears and lamentations, or by passionate ejaculations on the blindness of fortune, in suffering so divine a musical artist to be thus violently snatched away, and on the calamitous fate of musical science, which then stood on the brink of so dire an eclipse. In these moments he was most truly in an *agony*, according to the original meaning of that word; for the *conflict* was great between two master principles of his nature: on the one hand, he clung with the

weakness of a girl to life, even in that miserable shape to which it had now sunk; and like the poor malefactor, with whose last struggles Prior had so atrociously amused himself, 'he often took leave, but was loth to depart.' Yet, on the other hand, to resign his life very speedily, seemed his only chance for escaping the contumelies, perhaps the tortures, of his enemies; and, above all other considerations, for making sure of a burial, and possibly of burial rites; to want which, in the judgment of the ancients, was the last consummation of misery. Thus occupied and thus distracted—sternly attracted to the grave by his creed, hideously repelled by infirmity of nature—he was suddenly interrupted by a courier with letters for the master of the house; letters, and from Rome! What was their import? That was soon told: briefly that Nero was adjudged to be a public enemy by the base sycophantic Senate, and that official orders were issued for apprehending him, in order that he might be brought to condign punishment according to the method of ancient precedent. Ancient precedent! *more majorum!* And how was that? eagerly demanded the emperor. He was answered that the state criminal in such cases was first stripped naked, then impaled as it were between the prongs of a pitchfork, and in that condition scourged to death. Horror-struck with this account, he drew forth two poniards, or short swords, tried their edges, and then, in utter imbecility of purpose, returned them to their scabbards, alleging that the destined moment had not yet arrived. Then he called upon Sporus, the infamous partner in his former excesses, to commence the funeral anthem. Others, again, he besought to lead the way in dying, and to sustain him by the spectacle of their example. But this purpose also he dismissed in the very moment of utterance; and turning away despairingly, he apostrophized himself in

words reproachful or animating, now taxing his nature with infirmity of purpose, now calling on himself by name, with adjurations to remember his dignity, and to act worthily of his station: *οὐ πρέπει Νερωνι*, cried he; *οὐ πρέπει· νήφειν δεῖ ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις· ἄγε, ἔγειρε σεαυτον*—*i. e.*, Fie, fie, then, Nero! this is not becoming to Nero. In such extremities a man should be wide awake. Up, then, and rouse thyself to action.

Thus, and in similar efforts to master the weakness of his reluctant nature—weakness which would extort pity from the severest minds, were it not from the odious connexion which in him it had with cruelty the most merciless—did this unhappy prince, *jam non salutis spem sed exitii solatium quærens*, no longer looking for any hope of deliverance, but simply for consolation in his ruin, consume the flying moments, until at length his ears caught the fatal sounds or echoes from a body of horsemen riding up to the villa. These were the officers charged with his arrest; and if he should fall into their hands alive, he knew that his last chance was over for liberating himself, by a Roman death, from the burden of ignominious life, and from a lingering torture. He paused from his restless motions, listened attentively, then repeated a line from Homer—

Ἵππων μ' ὠκυπόδων ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὔατα βάλλει

(The resounding tread of swift-footed horses reverberates upon my ears); then under some momentary impulse of courage, gained perhaps by figuring to himself the bloody populace rioting upon his mangled body, yet even then needing the auxiliary hand and vicarious courage of his private secretary, the feeble-hearted prince stabbed himself in the throat. The wound, however, was not such as to cause instant death. He was still breathing, and not quite speechless, when the centurion who commanded the party entered

the closet; and to this officer, who uttered a few hollow words of encouragement, he was still able to make a brief reply. But in the very effort of speaking he expired, and with an expression of horror impressed upon his stiffened features, which communicated a sympathetic horror to all beholders.

Such was the too memorable tragedy which closed for ever the brilliant line of the Julian family, and translated the august title of Cæsar from its original purpose as a proper name to that of an official designation. It is the most striking instance upon record of a dramatic and extreme vengeance overtaking extreme guilt; for, as Nero had exhausted the utmost possibilities of crime, so it may be affirmed that he drank off the cup of suffering to the very extremity of what his peculiar nature allowed. And in no life of so short a duration, have there ever been crowded equal extremities of gorgeous prosperity and abject infamy. It may be added, as another striking illustration of the rapid mutability and revolutionary excesses which belonged to what has been properly called the Roman *stratocracy* or martial despotism then disposing of the world, that within no very great succession of weeks that same victorious rebel, the Emperor Galba, at whose feet Nero had been self-immolated, was laid a murdered corpse in the same identical cell which had witnessed the lingering agonies of his unhappy victim. This was the act of an emancipated slave, anxious, by a vindictive insult to the remains of one prince, to place on record his gratitude to another. "So runs the world away!" And in this striking way is retribution sometimes dispensed.

In the sixth Cæsar terminated the Julian line. The three next princes in the succession were personally uninteresting: and, with a slight reserve in favour of Otho,

whose motives for committing suicide (if truly reported) argue great nobility of mind,* were even brutal in the tenor of their lives and monstrous; besides that the extreme brevity of their several reigns (all three, taken conjunctly, having held the supreme power for no more than twelve months and twenty days) dismisses them from all effectual station or right to a separate notice in the line of Cæsars. Coming to the tenth in the succession, Vespasian, and his two sons, Titus and Domitian, who make up the list of the twelve Cæsars, as they are usually called, we find matter for deeper political meditation and subjects of curious research. But these emperors would be more properly classed with the five who succeed them—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines; after whom comes the young ruffian, Commodus, another Caligula or Nero, from whose short and infamous reign Gibbon takes up his tale of the decline of the empire. And this classification would probably have prevailed, had not the very curious work of Suetonius, whose own life and period of observation determined the series and cycle of his subjects, led to a different distribution. But as it is evident that, in the succession of the first twelve Cæsars, the six latter have no connexion whatever by descent, collaterally, or otherwise, with the six first, it would be a more logical distribution to combine them according to the fortunes of the state itself, and the succession of its prosperity through the several stages of splendour, declension, revival, and final decay. Under this arrangement, the first

* We may add that the unexampled public grief which followed the death of Otho, exceeding even that which followed the death of Germanicus, and causing several officers to commit suicide, implies some remarkable goodness in this prince, and a very unusual power of conciliating attachment.

seventeen would belong to the first stage; Commodus would open the second; Aurelian down to Constantine or Julian would fill the third; and Jovian to Augustulus would bring up the melancholy rear. Meantime it will be proper, after thus briefly throwing our eyes over the monstrous atrocities of the early Cæsars, to spend a few lines in examining their origin, and the circumstances which favoured their growth. For a mere hunter after hidden or forgotten singularities; a lover on their own account of all strange perversities and freaks of nature, whether in action, taste, or opinion; for a collector and amateur of misgrowths and abortions; for a Suetonius, in short, it may be quite enough to state and to arrange his cabinet of specimens from the marvellous in human nature. But certainly in modern times, any historian, however little affecting the praise of a philosophic investigator, would feel himself called upon to remove a little the taint of the strange and preternatural which adheres to such anecdotes, by entering into the psychological grounds of their possibility; whether lying in any peculiarly vicious education, early familiarity with bad models, corrupting associations, or other plausible key to effects, which, taken separately, and out of their natural connexion with their explanatory causes, are apt rather to startle and revolt the feelings of sober thinkers. Except, perhaps, in some chapters of Italian history, as, for example, among the most profligate of the Papal houses, and amongst some of the Florentine princes, we find hardly any parallel to the atrocities of Caligula and Nero; nor indeed was Tiberius much (if at all) behind them, though otherwise so wary and cautious in his conduct. The same tenor of licentiousness beyond the needs of the individual, the same craving after the monstrous and the stupendous in guilt, is continually emerging in succeeding emperors—

in Vitellius, in Domitian, in Commodus, in Caracalla—everywhere, in short, where it was not overruled by one of two causes, either by original goodness of nature too powerful to be mastered by ordinary seductions (and in some cases removed from their influence by an early apprenticeship to camps), or by the terrors of an exemplary ruin immediately preceding. For such a determinate tendency to the enormous and the anomalous, sufficient causes must exist. What were they?

In the first place, we may observe that the people of Rome in that age were generally more corrupt by many degrees than has been usually supposed possible. The effect of revolutionary times, to relax all modes of moral obligation, and to unsettle the moral sense, has been well and philosophically stated by Coleridge; but that would hardly account for the utter licentiousness and depravity of Imperial Rome. Looking back to Republican Rome, and considering the state of public morals but fifty years before the emperors, we can with difficulty believe that the descendants of a people so severe in their habits could thus rapidly degenerate, and that a populace, once so hard and masculine, should assume the manners which we might expect in the debauchees of Daphne (the infamous suburb of Antioch) or of Canopus, into which settled the very lees and dregs of the vicious Alexandria. Such extreme changes would falsify all that we know of human nature; we might *à priori* pronounce them impossible; and in fact, upon searching history, we find other modes of solving the difficulty. In reality, the citizens of Rome were at this time a new race, brought together from every quarter of the world, but especially from Asia. So vast a proportion of the ancient citizens had been cut off by the sword, and partly to conceal this

waste of population, but much more by way of cheaply requiting services, or of showing favour, or of acquiring influence, slaves had been emancipated in such great multitudes, and afterwards invested with all the rights of citizens, that, in a single generation, Rome became almost transmuted into a baser metal; the progeny of those whom the last generation had purchased from the slave merchants. These people derived their stock chiefly from Cappadocia, Pontus, &c., and the other populous regions of Asia Minor; and hence the taint of Asiatic luxury and depravity, which was so conspicuous to all the Romans of the old republican austerity. Juvenal is to be understood more literally than is sometimes supposed, when he complains that long before his time the Orontes (that river which washed the infamous capital of Syria) had mingled its impure waters with those of the Tiber. And a little before him, Lucan speaks with more historic gravity when he says—

" Vivant Galatæque Syrique
Cappadoces, Gallique, extremique orbis Iberi,
Armenii, Cilices: *nam post civilia bella*
Hic Populus Romanus erit."*

Probably in the time of Nero, not one man in six was of pure Roman descent.† And the consequences were answerable.

* Blackwell, in his *Court of Augustus*, vol. i. p. 382, when noticing these lines, upon occasion of the murder of Cicero, in the final proscription under the last triumvirate, comments thus: "Those of the greatest and truly Roman spirit had been murdered in the field by Julius Cæsar; the rest were now massacred in the city by his son and successors; in their room came Syrians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, and other enfranchised slaves from the conquered nations;"—" these in half a century had sunk so low, that Tiberius pronounced her very senators to be *homines ad servitutem natos*—men born to be slaves."

† Suetonius indeed pretends that Augustus, personally at least, struggled against this ruinous practice—thinking it a matter of the highest moment, "Sincerum atque ab omni colluvione peregrini et

Scarcely a family has come down to our knowledge that could not in one generation enumerate a long catalogue of divorces within its own contracted circle. Every man had married a series of wives; every woman a series of husbands. Even in the palace of Augustus, who wished to be viewed as an *exemplar* or ideal model of domestic purity, every principal member of his family was tainted in that way; himself in a manner and a degree infamous even at that time.* For the first four hundred years of Rome, not one divorce had been granted or asked, although the statute which allowed of this indulgence had always been in force. But in the age succeeding to the civil wars, men and women "married," says one author, "with a view to divorce, and

servilis sanguinis incorruptum servaré populum." And Horace is ready with his flatteries on the same topic, lib. 3, Od. 6. But the facts are against them, for the question is not what Augustus did in his own person (which at most could not operate very widely except by the example), but what he permitted to be done. Now there was a practice familiar to those times; that when a congiary or any other popular liberality was announced, multitudes were enfranchised by avaricious masters in order to make them capable of the bounty (as citizens), and yet under the condition of transferring to their emancipators whatsoever they should receive; ἰνὰ τὸν δημοσίως διδομένον σιτὸν λαμβάνοντες κατὰ μῆνα—φέρωσι τοῖς δεδώκασι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in order that, after receiving the corn given publicly in every month, they might carry it to those who had bestowed upon them their freedom. In a case, then, where an extensive practice of this kind was exposed to Augustus, and publicly reproved by him, how did he proceed? Did he reject the new-made citizens? No, he contented himself with diminishing the proportion originally destined for each, so that the same absolute sum being distributed among a number increased by the whole amount of the new enrolments, of necessity the relative sum for each separately was so much less. But this was a remedy applied only to the pecuniary fraud as it would have affected himself. The permanent mischief to the state went unredressed.

* Part of the story is well known, but not the whole. Tiberius Nero, a promising young nobleman, had recently married a very

divorced in order to marry. Many of these changes happened within the year, especially if the lady had a large fortune, which always went back with her, and procured her choice of transient husbands." And, "can one imagine," asks the same writer, "that the fair one who changed her husband every quarter, strictly kept her matrimonial faith all the three months?" Thus the very fountain of all the "household charities" and household virtues was polluted. And after that we need little wonder at the assassinations, poisonings, and forging of wills, which then laid waste the domestic life of the Romans.

2. A second source of the universal depravity was the growing inefficacy of the public religion; and this arose from its disproportion and inadequacy to the intellectual

splendid beauty. Unfortunately for him, at the marriage of Octavia (sister to Augustus) with Mark Antony, he allowed his young wife, then about eighteen, to attend upon the bride. Augustus was deeply and suddenly fascinated by her charms, and without further scruple sent a message to Nero, intimating that he was in love with his wife, and would thank him to resign her. The other, thinking it vain, in those days of lawless proscription, to contest a point of this nature with one who commanded thirty legions, obeyed the requisition. Upon some motive, now unknown, he was persuaded even to degrade himself further; for he actually officiated at the marriage in character of father, and gave away to his insolent rival, the insolent beauty, at that time six months advanced in pregnancy by himself. These humiliating concessions were extorted from him, and yielded (probably at the instigation of friends) in order to save his life. In the sequel they had the very opposite result; for he died soon after, and it is reasonably supposed of grief and mortification. At the marriage feast, an incident occurred which threw the whole company into confusion: A little boy, roving from couch to couch among the guests, came at length to that in which Livia (the bride) was reclining by the side of Augustus, whereupon he cried out aloud,—"Lady, what are you doing here? You are mistaken—this is not your husband—he is there" (pointing to Tiberius), "go, go; arise, lady, and recline beside *him*."

advances of the nation. *Religion*, in its very etymology, has been held to imply a *religatio*, that is, a reiterated or secondary obligation of morals; a sanction supplementary to that of the conscience. Now, for a rude and uncultivated people, the Pagan mythology might not be too gross to discharge the main functions of such a religious sanction. So long as the understanding could submit to the fables of the Pagan creed, so long it was possible that the hopes and fears built upon that creed might be practically efficient on men's lives and intentions. But when the foundation gave way, the whole superstructure of necessity fell to the ground. Those who were obliged to reject the ridiculous legends which invested the whole of their Pantheon, together with the fabulous adjudgers of future punishments, could not but dismiss the punishments, which were, in fact, as laughable, and as obviously the fictions of human ingenuity, as their dispensers. In short, the civilized part of the world in those days lay in this dreadful condition; their intellect had far outgrown their religion; the disproportions between the two were at length become monstrous; and as yet no purer or more elevated faith was prepared for their acceptance. The case was as shocking as if, with our present intellectual needs, we should be unhappy enough to have no creed on which to rest the burden of our final hopes and fears, of our moral obligations, and of our consolations in misery, except the fairy mythology of our nurses. The condition of a people so situated, of a people under the calamity of having outgrown its religious faith, has never been sufficiently considered. It is probable that such a condition has never existed before or since that era of the world. The consequences to Rome were—that the reasoning and disputatious part of her population took refuge from the painful state of doubt in Atheism; amongst the thoughtless and irreflective

the consequences were chiefly felt in their morals, which were thus sapped in their foundation.

3. A third cause, which from the first had exercised a most baleful influence upon the arts and upon literature in Rome, had by this time matured its disastrous tendencies towards the extinction of the moral sensibilities. This was the circus, and the whole machinery, form and substance, of the circensian shows, but, far more than the simply brutal circus, the inhuman amphitheatre. Why had tragedy no existence as a part of the Roman literature? Because —and *that* was a reason which would have sufficed to stifle all the dramatic genius of Greece and England—there was too much tragedy in the shape of gross reality, almost daily before their eyes. The amphitheatre extinguished the theatre. How was it possible that the fine and intellectual griefs of the drama should win their way to hearts seared and rendered callous by the continual exhibition of scenes the most hideous, in which human blood was poured out like water, and a human life sacrificed at any moment either to caprice in the populace, or to a strife of rivalry between the *ayes* and the *noes*, or as the penalty for any trifling instance of awkwardness in the gladiator himself? Even the more innocent exhibitions, in which brutes only were the sufferers, could not but be mortal to all the finer sensibilities. Five thousand wild animals, torn from their native abodes in the wilderness or forest, were often turned out to be hunted, or for mutual slaughter, in the course of a single exhibition of this nature; and it sometimes happened (a fact which of itself proclaims the course of the public propensities), that the person at whose expense the shows were exhibited, by way of paying special court to the people and meriting their favour, in the way most conspicuously open to him, issued orders that all, without a solitary exception,

should be slaughtered. He made it known, as the very highest gratification which the case allowed, that (in the language of our modern auctioneers) the whole, "without reserve," should perish before their eyes. Even such spectacles must have hardened the heart, and blunted the more delicate sensibilities; but these would soon cease to stimulate the pampered and exhausted sense. From the combats of tigers or leopards, in which the passions of the contending brutes could only be gathered indirectly, and by way of inference from the motions, the transition must have been almost inevitable to those of men, whose nobler and more varied passions spoke directly, and by the intelligible language of the eye, to human spectators; and from the frequent contemplation of these authorized murders, in which a whole people, women * as much as men, and children intermingled with both, looked on with leisurely indifference, with anxious expectation, or with rapturous delight, whilst below them were passing the direct revelations of human agony, and not seldom its dying pangs, it was impossible to expect a result different from that which did in fact take place—universal hardness of heart, obdurate depravity, and a twofold degradation of human nature, which acted simul-

* Augustus, indeed, strove to exclude the women from one part of the circensian spectacles; and what was that? Simply from the sight of the *Athletæ*, as being naked. But that they should witness the pangs of the dying gladiators, he deemed quite allowable. The smooth barbarian considered, that a license of the first sort offended against decorum, whilst the other violated only the sanctities of the human heart, and the whole sexual character of women. It is our opinion, that to the brutalizing effect of these exhibitions we are to ascribe not only the early extinction of the Roman drama, but generally the inferiority of Rome to Greece in every department of the fine arts. The fine temper of Roman sensibility, which no culture could have brought to the level of the Grecian, was thus dulled for *every* application.

taneously upon the two pillars of morality (otherwise not often assailed together), of natural sensibility in the first place, and, in the second, of conscientious principle.

4. But these were circumstances which applied to the whole population indiscriminately. Superadded to these, in the case of the emperor, and affecting *him* exclusively, was this prodigious disadvantage—that all ancient reverence for the immediate witnesses of his actions, and for the people and senate who would under other circumstances have exercised the old functions of the censor, was, as to the emperor, pretty nearly obliterated. The very title of *imperator*, from which we have derived our modern one of *emperor*, proclaims the nature of the government, and the tenure of that office. It was a merely *military* title, not popular or democratic by the smallest trace, but exclusively *castrensian*; and, if born in camps, necessarily the gift of a rude and perhaps wicked soldiery, trained in licentious habits, and often by the coercion of their situation. robbers and ruffians. The government of an imperator was therefore purely a government by the sword, or permanent *stratocracy* having a moveable head. Never was there a people who inquired so impertinently as the Romans into the domestic conduct of each private citizen. No rank escaped this jealous vigilance; and private liberty, even in the most indifferent circumstances of taste or expense, was sacrificed to this inquisitorial rigour of *surveillance* exercised on behalf of the State, sometimes by erroneous patriotism, too often by malice in disguise. To this spirit the highest public officers were obliged to bow; the consuls, not less than others. And even the occasional dictator, if by law irresponsible, acted nevertheless as one who knew that any change which depressed his party, might eventually abrogate his privilege. For the first time in the person of an

imperator was seen a supreme autocrat, who had virtually and effectively all the irresponsibility which the law assigned, and the origin of his office presumed. Satisfied to know that he possessed such power, Augustus, as much from natural taste as policy, was glad to dissemble it, and by every means to withdraw it from public notice. But *he* had passed his youth as citizen of a republic; and in the state of transition to autocracy, in his office of triumvir, had experimentally known the perils of rivalship, and the pains of alien control, too feelingly to provoke unnecessarily any sleeping embers of the republican spirit. Tiberius, though familiar from his infancy with the servile homage of a court, was yet modified by the popular temper of Augustus; and he came late to the throne. Caligula was the first prince on whom the entire effect of his political situation was allowed to operate; and the natural results were seen—he was the first absolute monster. He must early have seen the realities of his position, and from what quarter it was that any cloud could arise to menace his security. To the senate or people any respect which he might think proper to pay, must have been imputed by all parties to the lingering superstitions of custom, to involuntary habit, to court dissimulation, or to the decencies of external form, and the prescriptive reverence for ancient names. But neither senate nor people could enforce their claims, whatever they might happen to be. Their sanction and ratifying vote might be worth having, as consecrating what was already secure, and conciliating the scruples of the weak to the absolute decision of the strong. But their resistance, as an original movement, was so wholly without hope, that they were seldom weak enough to threaten it.

The army was the true successor to their places, being

the *ultimate* depository of power. Yet, as the army was necessarily subdivided, as the shifting circumstances upon every frontier were continually varying the strength of the several divisions as to numbers and state of discipline, one part might be balanced against any other by an imperator standing in the centre of the whole. The rigour of the military *sacramentum*, or oath of allegiance, made it dangerous to offer the first overtures to rebellion; and the money, which the soldiers were continually depositing in the bank, placed at the foot of their military standards, if sometimes turned against the emperor, was also liable to be sequestrated in his favour. There were then, in fact, two great forces in the government acting in and by each other—the Stratocracy and the Autrocracy. Each needed the other; each stood in awe of each. But, as regarded all other forces in the empire, constitutional or irregular, popular or senatorial, neither had anything to fear. Under any ordinary circumstances, therefore, considering the hazards of a rebellion, the emperor was substantially liberated from all control. Vexations or outrages upon the populace were not such to the army. It was but rarely that the soldier participated in the emotions of the citizen. And thus, being effectually without check, the most vicious of the Cæsars went on without fear, presuming upon the weakness in one part of his subjects, and the indifference in the other, until he was tempted onwards to atrocities which armed against him the common feelings of human nature: so that all mankind, as it were, rose in a body with one voice, and apparently with one heart, united by mere force of indignant sympathy, to put him down, and 'abate' him as a monster. But, until he brought matters to this extremity, Cæsar had no cause to fear. Nor was it at all certain, in any one instance, where this exemplary chastise-

ment overtook him, that the apparent unanimity of the actors went further than the *practical* conclusion of 'abating' the imperial nuisance, or that their indignation had settled upon the same offences. In general, the army measured the guilt by the public scandal rather than by its moral atrocity; and Cæsar suffered perhaps in every case, not so much because he had violated his duties, as because he had dishonoured his office.

It is, therefore, in the total absence of the checks which have almost universally existed to control other despots, under some indirect shape, even where none was provided by the laws, that we must seek for the main peculiarity affecting the condition of the Roman Cæsar, which peculiarity it was, superadded to the other three, that finally made those three operative in their fullest extent. It is in the perfection of the stratocracy that we must look for the key to the excesses of the autocrat. Even in the bloody despotisms of the Barbary States, there has always existed in the religious prejudices of the people, which could not be violated with safety, one check more upon the caprices of the despot than was found at Rome. Upon the whole, therefore, what affects us on the first reading as a prodigy or anomaly in the frantic outrages of the early Cæsars—falls within the natural bounds of intelligible human nature, when we state the case considerately. Surrounded by a population which had not only gone through a most vicious and corrupting discipline, and had been utterly ruined by the license of revolutionary times, and the bloodiest proscriptions, but had even been extensively changed in its very elements, and from the descendants of Romulus had been transmuted into an Asiatic mob; starting from this point, and considering as the second feature of the case, that this transfigured people, *morally* so degenerate, were

carried, however, by the progress of civilisation to a certain intellectual altitude, which the popular religion had not strength to ascend, but from inherent disproportion remained at the base of the general civilisation, incapable of accompanying the other elements in their advance; thirdly, that this polished condition of society, which should naturally with the evils of a luxurious repose have counted upon its pacific benefits, had yet, by means of its circus and its gladiatorial contests, applied a constant irritation, and a system of provocations to the appetites for blood, such as in all other nations are connected with the rudest stages of society, and with the most barbarous modes of warfare, nor even in such circumstances without many palliatives wanting to the spectators of the amphitheatre; combining these considerations, we have already a key to the enormities and hideous excesses of the Roman Imperator. The hot blood which excites, and the adventurous courage which accompanies, the excesses of sanguinary warfare, presuppose a condition of the moral nature not to be compared for malignity and baleful tendency to the cool and cowardly spirit of amateurship, in which the Roman (who might after all be an effeminate Asiatic) sat looking down upon the bravest of men (Thracians, or other Europeans) mangling each other for his recreation. When, lastly, from such a population, and thus disciplined from his nursery days, we suppose the case of one individual selected, privileged, and raised to a conscious irresponsibility, except at the bar of one extra-judicial tribunal, not easily irritated, and notoriously to be propitiated by other means than those of upright or impartial conduct, we lay together the elements of a situation too trying for human nature, and fitted only to the faculties of an angel or a demon; of an angel, if he should resist its temptations; of a demon, if he should revel in its

opportunities. Thus interpreted and solved, Caligula and Nero become ordinary and almost natural men.

But, finally, what if after all the worst of the Cæsars, and these in particular, were entitled to the benefit of a still more summary and conclusive apology? What if, in a true medical sense, they were insane? It is certain that a vein of madness ran in the family; and anecdotes are recorded of the three worst, which go far to establish it as a fact, and others which would imply it as symptoms preceding or accompanying. As belonging to the former class, take the following story: At midnight, an elderly gentleman suddenly sends round a message to a select party of noblemen, rouses them out of bed, and summons them instantly to his palace. Trembling for their lives from the suddenness of the summons, and from the unseasonable hour, and scarcely doubting that by some anonymous *delator* they have been denounced as parties to a conspiracy, they hurry to the palace, are received in portentous silence by the ushers and pages in attendance, are conducted to a saloon, where (as everywhere else) the silence of night prevails, united with the silence of fear and whispering expectation. All are seated; all look at each other in ominous anxiety. Which is accuser? Which is the accused? On whom shall their suspicion settle; on whom their pity? All are silent, almost speechless; and even the current of their thoughts is frost-bound by fear. Suddenly the sound of a fiddle is caught from a distance; it swells upon the ear, steps approach, and in another moment in rushes the elderly gentleman, grave and gloomy as his audience, but capering about in a frenzy of excitement. For half an hour he continues to perform all possible evolutions of caprioles, pirouettes, and other extravagant feats of activity, accompanying himself on the fiddle; and, at length, not having

once looked at his guests, the elderly gentleman whirls out of the room in the same transport of emotion with which he entered it ; the panic-struck visitors are requested by a slave to consider themselves dismissed ; they retire ; resume their couches ; the nocturnal pageant has "dislimned" and vanished ; and on the following morning, were it not for their concurring testimonies, all would be disposed to take this interruption of their sleep for one of its most fantastic dreams. The elderly gentleman that figured in this delirious *pas seul*—who was he ? He was Tiberius Cæsar, king of kings, and lord of the terraqueous globe. Would a British jury demand better evidence than this of a disturbed intellect in any formal process *de lunatico inquirendo ?* For Caligula, again, the evidence of symptoms is still plainer. He knew his own defect ; and proposed going through a course of hellebore ; white hellebore, we believe, cultivated in the Mediterranean island of Anticyra expressly as a remedy for insanity. Sleeplessness, one among the commonest indications of lunacy, haunted him in an excess rarely recorded.* The same, or similar facts,

* No fiction of romance presents so awful a picture of the ideal tyrant as that of Caligula by Suetonius. His palace radiant with purple and gold, but murder everywhere lurking beneath flowers ; his smiles and echoing laughter masking (yet hardly meant to mask) his foul treachery of heart ; his hideous and tumultuous dreams, his baffled sleep, and his sleepless nights, compose the picture of an Æschylus. What a master's sketch lies in these few lines · "Incitabatur insomnio maxime, neque enim plus tribus horis nocturnis quiescebat; ac ne his placidâ quiete, at pavidâ miris rerum imaginibus: ut qui inter ceteras pelagi quondam speciem colloquentem secum videre visus sit. Ideoque magna parte noctis, vigiliæ cubandique tædio, nunc toro residens, nunc per longissimas porticus vagus, invocare identidem atque exspectare lucem consueverat :" *i.e.*, But, above all, he was tormented with nervous irritation, by sleeplessness ; for he enjoyed not more than three hours of nocturnal repose ; nor

might be brought forward on behalf of Nero. And thus these unfortunate princes, who have so long (and with so little investigation of their cases) passed for monsters or for demoniac counterfeits of men, would at length be brought back within the fold of humanity, as objects rather of pity than of abhorrence; and, when thus reconciled at last to our human charities, would first of all be made intelligible to our understandings.

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even these in pure untroubled rest, but agitated by phantasmata of portentous augury; as, for example, upon one occasion among other spectral visions he fancied that he saw the Sea, under some definite impersonation, conversing with himself. Hence it was, and from this incapacity of sleeping, and from weariness of lying awake, that he had fallen into habits of ranging all the night long through the palace, sometimes throwing himself on a couch, sometimes wandering along the vast corridors, watching for the earliest dawn, and anxiously invoking its approach.

CHAPTER IV.

THE five Cæsars, viz., Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines, Pius, and his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, who succeeded immediately to the first twelve, were, in as high a sense as their office allowed, patriots. Hadrian is perhaps the first of all whom circumstances permitted to show his patriotism without fear. It illustrates at one and the same moment a trait in this emperor's character, and in the Roman habits, that he acquired much reputation for hardiness by walking bareheaded. "Never, on any occasion," says one of his memorialists (Dio), "neither in summer heat nor in winter's cold, did he cover his head; but, as well in the Celtic snows as in Egyptian heats, he went about bareheaded." This anecdote could not fail to win the especial admiration of Isaac Casaubon, who lived in an age when men believed a hat no less indispensable to the head, even within doors, than shoes or stockings to the feet. At the time when Isaac Casaubon was writing his commentary on the six authors of the *Augustan History*, viz., in all likelihood, during the seven last years of Queen Elizabeth [1595-1602], no man, gentle or simple, *doffed* his night-cap without *donning* his hat, which he wore all day long at home or abroad. His astonishment on the occasion is thus expressed: "Tantum est ἡ ἄσκησις:" such and so mighty is the force of habit and daily use. And then he goes on to ask: "Quis hodie nudum caput radiis

solis, aut omnia perurenti frigori, ausit exponere?—Who is it that now-a-days would dare to expose his uncovered head to the solar beams, or to the all-scorching and withering frost?" Who is it? dost thou ask, Isaac; why, pretty nearly everybody; and, amongst others, we ourselves that are writing this book; yes, we and our illustrious friend, Christopher North, did for three-and-twenty years walk amongst our British lakes and mountains hatless, and amidst both snow and rain, such as Romans did not often experience. We were naked, but were not ashamed. Nor in this are we altogether singular. But, says Casaubon, the Romans went farther; for they walked about the streets of Rome bareheaded,* and never assumed a hat or a cap, a *petasus* or a *galerus*, a Macedonian *causia*, or a *pileus*, whether Thessalian, Arcadian, or Laconic, unless when they entered upon a journey. Nay, some there were, as Massinissa and Julius Cæsar, who declined even on such an occasion to cover their heads. Perhaps, in imitation of these celebrated leaders, it might be that Hadrian adopted the same practice, but not with the same result; for to him, either from age or constitution, this very custom proved the original occasion of his last illness.

Imitation, indeed, was a general principle of action with Hadrian, and the key to much of his public conduct; and allowably enough, considering the exemplary lives (in a public sense) of some who had preceded him, and the singular anxiety with which he distinguished between the lights and shadows of their examples. He imitated the great Dictator, Julius, in his vigilance of inspection into the civil,

* And hence we may the better estimate the trial to a Roman's feelings in the personal deformity of baldness, connected with the Roman theory of its cause, for the exposure of it was perpetual.

not less than the martial police of his times, shaping his new regulations to meet abuses as they arose, and strenuously maintaining the old ones in vigorous operation. As respected the army, this was matter of peculiar praise, because peculiarly disinterested; for his foreign policy was pacific;* he made no new conquests; and he retired from the old ones of Trajan, where they could not have been maintained without disproportionate bloodshed, or a jealousy beyond the value of the stake. In this point of his administration he took Augustus for his model; as again in his care of the army, in his occasional bounties, and in his paternal solicitude for their comforts, he looked rather to the example of Julius. Him also he imitated in his affability and in his ambitious courtesies; one instance of which, as blending an artifice of political subtlety and simulation with a remarkable exertion of memory, it may be well to mention. The custom was, in canvassing the citizens of Rome, that the candidate should address every voter by his name; it being a fiction of republican etiquette, that every man participating in the political privileges of the State, every man who prided himself on possessing the *jus suffragii*, must be personally known to public aspirants. But, as this was impossible, in any literal sense, to men with the ordinary endowments of memory, in order to reconcile the pretensions of republican hauteur with the necessities of human weakness, a custom had grown up of relying upon a class of men, called *nomenclators*, whose express business and profession it was to make themselves acquainted with the person and name of each individual citizen. One of these people accompanied every candidate, and quietly whispered into his ear

* "Expeditiones sub eo," says Spartian, "graves nullæ fuerunt. Bella etiam silentio pene transacta." But he does not the less add, "A militibus, propter curam exercitûs nimiam, multum amatus est."

the name of each voter as he came in sight. Few, indeed, were they who could dispense with the services of such an assessor; for the office imposed a twofold memory, that of names and of persons; and to estimate the immensity of the effort, we must recollect that the number of voters often far exceeded one quarter of a million. Hadrian, however, relied upon his own unprompted powers for the discharge of this duty. The very same trial of memory he undertook with respect to his own army, in this instance recalling the well-known feat, or pretended feat, of Mithridates. And throughout his life he did not once forget the face or name of any veteran soldier whom he had ever occasion to notice, no matter under what remote climate, or under what difference of circumstances. Wonderful is the effect upon soldiers of such enduring and separate remembrance, which operates always as the most touching kind of personal flattery, and which, in every age of the world, since the social sensibilities of men have been much developed, military commanders are found to have played upon as the most effectual chord in the great system which they modulated; some few, by a rare endowment of nature; others, as Napoleon Bonaparte, by elaborate mimicries of pantomimic art.*

Other modes he had of winning affection from the army; in particular that, so often practised before and since, of

* In the true spirit of Parisian mummery, Bonaparte caused letters to be written from the War Office, in his own name, to particular soldiers of high military reputation in every brigade (whose private history he had previously caused to be investigated), alluding circumstantially to the leading facts in their personal or family career; a furlough accompanied this letter, and they were requested to repair to Paris, where the emperor anxiously desired to see them. Thus was the paternal interest expressed, which their leader took in each man's fortunes; and the effect of every such letter, it was not doubted, would diffuse itself through ten thousand other men.

accommodating himself to the strictest ritual of martial discipline and castrensian life. He slept in the open air; or, if he used a tent (papilio), it was open at the sides. He ate the ordinary rations of cheese, bacon, &c.; he used no other drink than that composition of vinegar and water known by the name of *posca*, which formed the sole beverage allowed through a thousand years in the Roman camps. He joined personally in the periodical exercises of the army—those even which were trying to the most vigorous youth and health: marching, for example, on stated occasions, twenty English miles without intermission, in full armour and completely accoutred. Luxury of every kind he not only interdicted to the soldier by severe ordinances, himself enforcing their execution, but discountenanced it (though elsewhere splendid and even gorgeous in his personal habits) by his own continual example. In dress, for instance, he sternly banished the purple and gold embroideries, the jewelled arms, and the floating draperies so little in accordance with the severe character of "*war in procinct.*" * Hardly would he allow himself an ivory hilt to his sabre. The same severe proscription he extended to every sort of furniture, or decorations of art, which sheltered even in the bosom of camps those habits of effeminate luxury—so apt in all great empires to steal by imperceptible steps from the voluptuous palace to the soldier's tent—following in the equipage of great leading officers, or of subalterns highly connected. There was at that time a practice prevailing, in the great standing camps on the several frontiers, and at

* "*War in procinct:*"—A phrase of Milton's in *Paradise Regained* which strikingly illustrates his love of Latin phraseology; for, unless to a scholar, previously acquainted with the Latin phrase of *in procinctu*, it is so absolutely unintelligible as to interrupt the current of the feeling.

all the military stations, of renewing as much as possible the image of distant Rome by the erection of long colonnades and piazzas—single, double, or triple; of crypts, or subterranean saloons * (and sometimes subterranean galleries and corridors), for evading the sultry noontides of July and August; of verdant cloisters or arcades, with roofs high over-arched, constructed entirely out of flexile shrubs, box, myrtle, and others, trained and trimmed in regular forms; besides endless other applications of the topiary art, † which in those days (like the needlework of Miss Linwood ‡ in our own), though no more than a mechanic craft, in some mea-

* "*Crypts*:"—These, which Spartian, in his life of Hadrian, denominates simply *cryptæ*, are the same which, in the Roman jurisprudence, and in the architectural works of the Romans, yet surviving, are termed *hypogæa deambulationes*, *i.e.* subterranean parades Vitruvius treats of this luxurious class of apartments in connexion with the *Apothecæ*, and other repositories or store-rooms, which were also in many cases under ground, for the same reason as our ice-houses, wine-cellars, &c. He (and from him Pliny and Apollonaris Sidonius) calls them *crypto-porticus* (cloistral colonnades); and Ulpian, calls them *refugia* (sanctuaries, or places of refuge); St. Ambrose notices them under the name of *hypogæa* and *umbrosa penetralia*, as the resorts of voluptuaries: *Luxuriosorum est*, says he, *hypogæa quærere—captantium frigus æstivum;* and again he speaks of *desidiosi qui ignava sub terris agant otia.*

† "*The topiary art:*"—So called, as Salmasius thinks, from τοπήϊον, *a rope;* because the process of construction was conducted chiefly by means of cords and strings. This art was much practised in the 17th century; and Casaubon describes one which existed in his early days somewhere in the suburbs of Paris, on so elaborate a scale, that it represented Troy besieged, with the two hosts, their several leaders, and all other objects in their full proportion.

‡ "*Miss Linwood:*"—Alas! *Fuit Ilium;* and it has actually become necessary, in a generation that knew not Joseph, that we should tell the reader who was Miss Linwood. For many a long year between 1800 and perhaps 1835 or 1840, she had in Leicester Square, London, a most gorgeous exhibition of needlework—arras that by its exquisite effects, rivalled the works of mighty painters.

sure realized the effects of a fine art by the perfect skill of its execution. All these modes of luxury, with a policy that had the more merit as it thwarted his own private inclinations, did Hadrian peremptorily abolish; perhaps amongst other more obvious purposes, seeking to intercept the earliest buddings of those local attachments which are as injurious to the martial character (for the soldier's vocation obliges him to consider himself eternally under marching orders), as they are propitious to all the best interests of society in connexion with the feelings of civic life.

We dwell upon this prince not without reason in connection with this particular distinction, *i.e.*, the discipline of the army. This, which since the period of Augustus had been drooping through the neglect of preceding emperors, Hadrian by personal efforts re-established; for, amongst the Cæsars, Hadrian stands forward in high relief as a reformer of the army. Well and truly it might be said of him that, *post Cæsarem Octavianum labantem disciplinam, incuriâ superiorum principum, ipse retinuit.* Not content with the cleansings and purgations we have mentioned, he placed upon a new footing the whole tenure, duties, and pledges, of military offices.* It cannot much surprise us that this department of the public service should gradually have gone to ruin or decay. Under the senate and people, under the auspices of those awful symbols—letters more

* Very remarkable it is, and a fact which speaks volumes as to the democratic constitution of the Roman army, in the midst of that aristocracy which enveloped its parent state in a civil sense, that although there was a name for a *common soldier* (or *sentinel*, as he was termed by our ancestors)—viz., *miles gregarius*, or *miles manipularis*—there was none for an *officer*; that is to say, each several rank of officers had a name; but there was no generalization to express the idea of an officer abstracted from its several species or classes: a fact almost incredible!

significant and ominous than ever before had troubled the eyes of man, except upon Belshazzar's wall—S. P. Q. R., the officers of the Roman army had been kept true to their duties by emulation and a healthy ambition. But, when the ripeness of corruption had by dissolving the body of the State brought out of its ashes a new mode of life, and had recast the aristocratic republic, by aid of its democratic elements then suddenly victorious, into a pure autocracy—whatever might be the advantages in other respects of this great change, in one point it had certainly injured the public service, by throwing the higher military appointments, all in fact which conferred any authority, into the channels of court favour— and by consequence into a mercenary disposal. Each successive emperor had been too anxious for his own immediate security, to find leisure for the remoter interests of the empire; the *Imperium* was lost sight of in the *Imperator;* all looked to the army, as it were, for their own immediate security against competitors, without venturing to tamper with its constitution, to risk popularity by reforming abuses, to balance present interest against a remote one, or to cultivate the public welfare at the hazard of their own: contented with obtaining this last, they left the internal arrangements of so formidable a body in that condition to which circumstances had brought it, and to which naturally the views of all existing beneficiaries had gradually adjusted themselves. What these might be, and to what further results they might tend, was a matter of moment doubtless to the empire. But the empire was strong; if its motive energy for going ahead was decaying, its *vis inertiæ* for resistance was for ages enormous: whilst the emperor was always in the beginning of his authority weak, and pledged by instant interest, no less than by express promises, to the support of that body whose favour

had substantially supported himself. Hadrian was the first who turned his attention effectually in the counter direction; whether it were that he first was struck with the tendency of the abuses; or that he valued the hazard less which he incurred in correcting them; or that, having no successor of his own blood, he had a less personal and affecting interest at stake in setting this hazard at defiance. Hitherto, the highest regimental rank, that of tribune, had been disposed of in two ways, either civilly upon popular favour and election, or upon the express recommendation of the soldiery. This custom had prevailed under the republic, and the force of habit had availed to propagate that practice under a new mode of government. But now were introduced new regulations: the tribune (or colonel commandant) was selected for his military qualities and experience: none was appointed to this important office, "*nisi barbâ plenâ.*" The centurion's truncheon * (his *vitis* or vine-tree cane or cudgel with which he cudgelled the five or six hundred men under his command), again, was given to no man, "*nisi robusto et bonæ famæ.*" The arms and military appointments (*supellectilis*) were revised; the

* *Vitis:* and it deserves to be mentioned, that this staff, or cudgel, which was the official engine and cognizance of the centurion's dignity, was meant expressly to be used in caning or cudgelling the inferior soldiers · "*propterea* vitis in manum data," says Salmasius, "*verberando scilicet militi qui deliquissett*"—For that very reason a vine-tree cane or wand was furnished to the head, viz, for the purpose of cudgelling my soldier trespassing. We are no patrons of corporal chastisement, which, on the contrary, as the vilest of degradations to all nobility of feeling, we abominate more vehemently, as the Homeric Achilles says of lying, than the gates of hell. The soldier who does not feel himself dishonoured by it is already dishonoured beyond hope or redemption. But still let this degradation not be mendaciously imputed to the English army exclusively

register of names was duly called over; and none suffered to remain in the camps who was either above or below the military age. The same vigilance and jealousy were extended to the great stationary stores and repositories of biscuit, vinegar, and other equipments for the soldiery. All things were in constant readiness in the capital and the provinces, in the garrisons and camps, abroad and at home, to meet the outbreak of a foreign war or a domestic sedition. Whatever were the service, it could by no possibility find Hadrian unprepared. And he first, in fact, of all the Cæsars, restored to its ancient republican standard, as reformed and perfected by Marius, the old martial discipline of the Scipios and the Paulli—that discipline, to which, more than to any physical superiority of her soldiery, Rome had been indebted for her conquest of the earth; and which had inevitably decayed in the long series of wars growing out of personal ambition. From the days of Marius, every great leader had sacrificed to the necessities of courting favour from the troops, as much as was possible of the hardships incident to actual service, and as much as he dared of the once rigorous discipline. Hadrian first found himself in circumstances, or was the first who had courage enough, to decline a momentary interest in favour of a greater in reversion; and a personal object which was but transient, in exchange for a state one that was continually revolving.

For a prince, with no children of his own, it is in any case a task of peculiar delicacy to select a successor. In the Roman empire the difficulties were much aggravated. The interests of the State were, in the first place, to be consulted; for a mighty burthen of responsibility rested upon the emperor in the most personal sense. Duties of every kind fell to his station, which, from the peculiar con-

stitution of the government, and from circumstances rooted in the very origin of the imperatorial office, could not be devolved upon a council. Council there was none, that could be recognised as such in the State machinery. The emperor, himself a sacred and sequestered creature, might be supposed to enjoy the secret tutelage of the Supreme Deity; but a council, composed of subordinate and responsible agents, could *not*. Again, the auspices of the emperor, and his edicts, apart even from any celestial or supernatural inspiration, simply as emanations of his own consecrated character, had a value and a sanctity which could never belong to those of a council, or to those even which had been sullied by the breath of any less august reviser. The emperor, therefore, or—as with a view to his solitary and unique character we ought to call him—in the original irrepresentable term, the imperator, could not delegate his duties, or execute them in any avowed form by proxies or representatives. He was himself the great fountain of law, of honour, of preferment, of civil and political regulations. He was the fountain also of good and evil fame. He was the great chancellor, or supreme dispenser of equity to all climates, nations, and languages, of his mighty dominions, which connected the turbaned races of the Orient, and those who sat in the gates of the rising sun, with the islands of the West, and the unfathomed depths of the mysterious Scandinavia. He was the universal guardian of the public and private interests which composed the great edifice of the social system as then existing amongst his subjects. Above all, and out of his own private purse, he supported the heraldries of his dominions—the peerage, senatorial or prætorian, and the great gentry or chivalry of the Equites. These were classes who would have been dishonoured by the censorship of a

less august comptroller. And for the classes below these, by how much they were lower and more remote from his ocular superintendence, by so much the more were they linked to him in a connexion of absolute dependence. Cæsar it was who provided their daily food, Cæsar who provided their pleasures and relaxations. He chartered the fleets which brought grain to the Tiber; he bespoke the Sardinian granaries whilst yet unformed, and the harvests of the Nile whilst yet unsown. Not the connexion between a mother and her unborn infant is more intimate and vital, than that which subsisted between the mighty populace of the Roman capital and their paternal emperor. They drew their nutriment from him; they lived and were happy by sympathy with the motions of his will; to him also the arts, the knowledge, and the literature of the empire looked for support, and stood frozen like ice-bound rivers, until Cæsar's hand had indicated the channels in which they should flow. To him the armies looked for their laurels; and the eagles in every clime turned their aspiring eyes, waiting to bend their flight according to the signal of his Jovian nod. And all these vast functions and ministrations arose partly as a natural effect, but partly also they were a cause of the emperor's own divinity. He was capable of services so exalted, because he also even whilst yet on earth was held a god, and had his own altars, his own incense, his own worship, and his separate priests. Such was the cause, and such was the result of his bearing, on his own shoulders, a burthen so mighty and Atlantean.

Yet, if in this view it was needful to have a man of talent, on the other hand there was reason to dread a man of talents too adventurous, too aspiring, or too intriguing. His situation, not as Augustus, but as Cæsar, or Crown

Prince, after the title of Cæsar had come to denote the secondary office, flung into his hands a power of fomenting conspiracies, and of concealing them until the very moment of explosion, which made him an object of almost exclusive terror to his principal, the Cæsar Augustus. His situation again, as an heir voluntarily adopted, made him the proper object of public affection and caresses, which became peculiarly embarrassing to one who had, perhaps, soon found reasons for suspecting, fearing, and hating him beyond all other men.

The young nobleman, whom Hadrian adopted by his earliest choice, was Lucius Aurelius Verus, the son of Cejonius Commodus. These names were borne also by the son; but, after his adoption into the Ælian family, he was generally known by the appellation of Ælius Verus. The scandal of those times imputed his adoption to the worst motives. "*Adriano*," says one author ("*ut malevoli loquunter*), *acceptior formâ quam moribus*." And thus much undoubtedly there is to countenance so shocking an insinuation, that very little is recorded of the young prince but such anecdotes as illustrate his excessive luxury and effeminate dedication to pleasure. Still, it is our private opinion, that Hadrian's real motives have been misrepresented; that he sought in the young man's extraordinary beauty—[for he was, says Spartian, *pulchritudinis regiæ*]—a plausible pretext that should be sufficient to explain and to countenance his preference, whilst under this provisional adoption he was enabled to postpone the definitive choice of an imperator elect, until his own more advanced age might diminish the motives for intriguing against himself. It was, therefore, a mere *ad interim* adoption; for it is certain, however we may choose to explain that fact, that Hadrian foresaw and calculated on the early death of Ælius. This

prophetic knowledge may have been grounded on a private familiarity with some constitutional infirmity affecting his daily health, or with some habits of life incompatible with longevity, or with both combined. It is pretended that this distinguished mark of favour was conferred in fulfilment of a direct contract on the emperor's part, as the price of favours, such as the Latin reader will easily understand from the strong expression of Spartian above cited. But it is far more probable that Hadrian relied on this admirable beauty, and allowed it so much weight, as being for the multitude the most intelligible explanation of his choice, and for the nobility the least invidious solution of a preference, which raised one of their own number so far above the level of his natural peers. The necessities of the moment were thus satisfied without present or future danger;—as respected the future, he knew or believed that Verus was marked out for early death; and would often say, in a strain of compliment somewhat disproportionate, applying to him the Virgilian lines on the hopeful and lamented Marcellus,

> "Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
> Esse sinent."

And, at the same time, to countenance the belief that he had been disappointed, he would affect to sigh, exclaiming—"Ah! that I should thus fruitlessly have squandered a sum of three * millions sterling!" for so much had been distributed in largesses to the people and the army on the occasion of his inauguration. Meantime, as respected the present, the qualities of the young man were amply fitted

* In the original *ter millies*, which is not much above two millions and one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling; but it must be remembered that one-third as much, in addition to this popular largess, had been given to the army.

to sustain a Roman popularity; for, in addition to his extreme and statuesque beauty of person, already, as a military officer, he had a respectable* character; as an orator he was more than respectable; and in other qualifications that might be less interesting to the populace, he had that happy mediocrity of merit which was best fitted for his delicate and difficult situation, sufficient to do credit to the emperor's preference, sufficient to sustain the popular regard, but not brilliant enough to throw his patron into the shade. For the rest, his vices were of a nature not greatly or necessarily to interfere with his public duties; and emphatically such as met with the readiest indulgence from the Roman laxity of morals. Some few instances, indeed, are noticed of cruelty; but there is reason to think that it was merely by accident, and as an indirect result of other purposes, that he ever allowed himself in such manifestations of irresponsible power—not as gratifying any harsh impulses of his native character. The most remarkable neglect of humanity with which he has been taxed, occurred in the treatment of his couriers; these were the bearers of news and official despatches, at that time fulfilling the functions of the modern post: and it must be borne in mind that as yet they were not slaves (as afterwards by the reformation of Alexander Severus), but free citizens. They had been already dressed in a particular livery or uniform, and possibly they might wear some symbolical badges of their profession; but the new Cæsar chose to dress them altogether in character as winged Cupids, affixing literal wings to their shoulders, and facetiously distinguishing them

* —— "nam bene gestis rebus, vel potius feliciter, esti non summi —medii tamen obtinuit ducis famam"—For by the able, or rather by the fortunate, conduct of affairs, he won the reputation—though not of a supreme—yet of a tolerable or second-class strategist.

by the names of the cardinal winds (Boreas, Notus, &c.), and others as levanters or hurricanes (Circius, &c.) Thus far he did no more than indulge a blameless fancy, and such, in fact, as our own solemn Admiralty indulge allowably in christening their little saucy gun-boats—for instance, the Spitfire, the Boxer, the Blazer, the Vixen;* but in his anxiety that his runners should emulate their patron winds, and do credit to the names which he had assigned them, he is said to have exacted a degree of speed inconsistent with any merciful regard for their bodily powers.† But these were, after all, perhaps, mere improvements of malice upon some solitary incident. The true stain upon his memory, and one which is open to no doubt whatever, is excessive and extravagant luxury—excessive in degree, extravagant and even ludicrous in its forms. For example, he constructed a sort of bed or sofa, protected from insects by an awning of network composed of lilies, delicately fabricated into the proper meshes, &c., and the couches composed wholly of rose-leaves; but even of these, not without an exquisite preparation; for the white parts of the leaves, as coarser and harsher to the touch (possibly, also, as less

* And as it is not absolutely impossible that we may see Mr. Roebuck a Lord of the Admiralty—in that case we shall, of course, have a *Tear'em*.—See his famous speech on Cherbourg, &c.

† This, however, is a point in which royal personages claim an old prescriptive right to be unreasonable in their exactions; and some, even amongst the most humane of Christian princes, have erred as flagrantly as Ælius Verus. George IV., we have understood, was generally escorted from Dalkeith to Holyrood at a rate of twenty-two miles an hour. And of his father, the truly kind and paternal king, it is recorded by Miss Hawkins (daughter of Sir J. Hawkins, the biographer of Johnson, &c.), that families who happened to have a son, brother, lover, &c. in the particular regiment of cavalry which furnished the escort to Windsor for the day, used to suffer as much anxiety for the result as on the eve of a great battle.

odorous), were scrupulously rejected. Here he lay indolently stretched amongst favourite ladies,

"And like a naked Indian slept himself away."

He had also tables composed of the same delicate material—prepared and purified in the same elaborate way—and to these were adapted seats in the fashion of sofas (*accubationes*), corresponding in their material, and in their mode of preparation. He was also an expert performer, and even an original inventor, in the art of cookery; and one dish of his discovery, which, from its four component parts, obtained the name of *tetrapharmacum*, was so far from owing its celebrity to its royal birth, that it maintained its place on Hadrian's table to the time of his death. These, however, were mere fopperies or pardonable extravagancies in one so young and so exalted, traits not becoming to the state character with which he had been clothed, yet still noways tending to public mischief; "quæ, etsi non decora," as the historian observes, "non tamen ad perniciem publicam prompta sunt." A graver mode of licentiousness appeared in his connexions with women. He made no secret of his lawless amours; and to his own wife, on her expostulating with him on his aberrations in this respect, he replied that "*wife*" was a designation of rank and official dignity, not of tenderness and affection, or implying any claim of love on either side; upon which distinction he begged that she would mind her own affairs, and leave him to pursue such as he might himself be involved in by his sensibility to female charms.

However, he and all his errors, his "regal beauty," his princely pomps, and his authorized hopes, were suddenly swallowed up by the inexorable grave; and he would have passed away like an exhalation, and leaving no remembrance

of himself more durable than his own beds of rose-leaves, and his reticulated canopies of lilies, had it not been that Hadrian filled the world with images of his perfect fawn-like beauty in the shape of colossal statues, and raised temples even to his memory in various cities. This Cæsar, therefore, dying thus prematurely, never tasted of empire; and his name would have had but a doubtful title to a place in the imperatorial roll, had it not been recalled to a second chance for the sacred honours in the person of his son—whom it was the pleasure of Hadrian, by way of testifying his affection for the father, to associate in the order of succession with the philosophic Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. This fact, and the certainty that to the second Ælius Verus he gave his own daughter in marriage, rather than to his associate Cæsar Marcus Aurelius, make it evident that his regret for the elder Verus was unaffected and deep; and they overthrow effectually the common report of historians, that he repented of his earliest choice, as of one that had been disappointed not by the decrees of fate, but by the violent defect of merits in its object. On the contrary, he prefaced his inauguration of this junior Cæsar by the following tender words: Let us confound the rapine of the grave, and let the empire possess amongst her rulers a second Ælius Verus. Rise again, therefore, departed Ælius, incarnation of heavenly beauty; rise a second time for the homage of Rome and of her subject Earth!

"*Diis aliter visum est*:" the blood of the Ælian family was not privileged to ascend or aspire: it gravitated violently to extinction; and this junior Verus is supposed to have been as much indebted to his assessor on the throne for shielding his obscure vices, and drawing over his defects the ample draperies of the imperatorial robe, as he was to Hadrian, his grandfather by fiction of law, for his adoption

into the reigning family, and his consecration as one of the Cæsars. He, says one historian, shed no ray of light or illustration upon the imperial house, except by one solitary quality. This bears a harsh sound : but it has the effect of a sudden redemption for his memory, when we learn that this solitary quality, in virtue of which he claimed a natural affinity to the sacred house, and challenged a natural interest in the purple, was the very princely one of a merciful disposition.

The two Antonines fix an era in the imperial history; for they were both eminent models of wise and good rulers ; and some would say, that they fixed a crisis ; for with their successor commenced, in the popular belief, the decline of the empire. That at least is the doctrine of Gibbon ; but perhaps it would not be found altogether able to sustain itself against a closer and philosophic examination of the true elements involved in the idea of declension as applied to political bodies. Be that as it may, however, and waiving any interest which might happen to invest the Antonines as the last princes who kept up the empire to its original level, both of them had enough of merit to challenge a separate notice in their personal characters, and apart from the accidents of their great official station.

The elder of the two, who is usually distinguished by the title of *Pius*, is thus described by one of his biographers : "He was externally of remarkable beauty ; eminent for his moral character, full of benign dispositions, noble, with a countenance of a most gentle expression, intellectually of singular endowments, possessing an elegant style of eloquence, distinguished for his literature, generally temperate, an earnest lover of agricultural pursuits, mild in his deportment, bountiful in the use of his own, but a stern respecter of the rights of others ; and, finally, he was all this without

ostentation, and with a constant regard to the proportions of cases, and to the demands of time and place." His bounty displayed itself in a way which may be worth mentioning, as at once illustrating the age, and the prudence with which he controlled the most generous of his impulses: "*Fœnus trientarium*,"* says the historian, "*hoc est minimis usuris exercuit, ut patrimonio suo plurimos adjuvaret.*" The meaning of which is this: in Rome, the customary interest for money was technically called *centesimæ usuræ*; that is, the hundredth part, or one per cent. But, as this expressed not the annual, but the *monthly* interest, the true rate was, in fact, twelve per cent.; and that is the meaning of *centesimæ usuræ*. Nor could money be obtained anywhere on better terms than these; and, moreover, this one per cent. was exacted rigorously as the monthly day came round, no arrears being suffered to lie over. Under these circumstances, it was a prodigious service to lend money at a diminished rate, and one which furnished many men with the means of saving themselves from ruin. Pius then, by way of extending his aid as far as possible, reduced the monthly rate of his loans to one-third per cent., which made the annual interest the very moderate one of four per cent. The channels which public spirit had as yet opened to the beneficence of the opulent were few indeed; charity and munificence languished, or they were abused, or they were inefficiently directed, simply through defects in the structure of society. Social organization, for its large development, demanded the agency of newspapers (together with many other forms of assistance from the press), of

* "He practised a mode of usury at the very lowest rates, viz., under a discount of two-thirds from the ordinary terms, so as that, from his own private patrimonial funds, he might thus relieve the greatest number possible of clients."

banks, of public carriages on an extensive scale, besides infinite other inventions or establishments not yet created—which support and powerfully react upon that same progress of society which originally gave birth to themselves. All things considered, in the Rome of that day, where the utmost munificence confined itself to direct largesses of a few leading viands or condiments—a great step was taken, and the best step, in this lending of money at a low interest, towards a more refined and beneficial mode of charity.

In his public character, he was perhaps the most patriotic of Roman emperors, and the purest from all taint of corrupt or indirect ends. Peculation, embezzlement, or misapplication of the public funds, were universally corrected ; provincial oppressors were exposed and defeated : the taxes and tributes were diminished ; and the public expenses were thrown as much as possible upon the public estates, and in some instances upon private estates. So far, indeed, did Pius stretch his sympathy with the poorer classes of his subjects, that on this account chiefly he resided permanently in the capital ; alleging in excuse, partly that he thus stationed himself in the very centre of his mighty empire, to which all couriers could come by the shortest radii, but chiefly that he thus spared the provincialists those burthens which must else have alighted upon them ; "For," said he, "even the slenderest retinue of a Roman emperor is burthensome to the whole line of its progress." His tenderness and consideration, indeed, were extended to all classes, and all relations of his subjects ; even to those who stood within the shadow of his public displeasure as State delinquents, or as the most atrocious criminals. To the children of great treasury defaulters, he returned the confiscated estates of their fathers, deducting only what might indemnify the exchequer. And so reso-

lutely did he refuse to shed the blood of any in the senatorial order, to whom he conceived himself more especially bound in paternal ties, that even a parricide, whom the laws would not suffer to live, was simply exposed upon a desert island.

Little indeed did Pius want of being a perfect Christian, in heart and in practice. Yet all this display of goodness and merciful indulgence, nay, all his munificence, would have availed him little with the people at large, had he neglected to furnish on the arena shows and exhibitions of suitable magnificence. Luckily for his reputation, he exceeded the general standard of imperial splendour not less as the patron of the amphitheatre than as the benign *Pater Patriæ*. It is recorded of him that in one *missio* he sent forward on the arena a hundred lions. Nor was he less distinguished by the rarity of the wild animals which he exhibited than by their number. There were elephants, there were crocodiles, there were hippopotami, at one time upon the stage: there was also the rhinoceros, and the still rarer *crocuta* or *corocotta*, with a few *strepsikerotes*. Some of these were matched in duels, some in general battles with tigers; in fact, there was no species of wild animal throughout the deserts and sandy Zaarras of Africa, the infinite *steppes* of Asia, or the lawny recesses and dim forests of then sylvan Europe,* no species known to natural history (and some even of which naturalists have lost sight), which the Emperor Pius did not produce to his

* And not impossibly of America; for it must be remembered that, when we speak of America as a quarter of the earth yet unknown, we mean unknown to ourselves of the western climates; since as respects the eastern quarters of Asia, doubtless America was known there familiarly enough before Christ, or even before Romulus; and the high bounties of imperial Rome on rare animals, would sometimes perhaps propagate their influence even to those regions.

Roman subjects on his ceremonious pomps. And in another point he carried his splendours to a point which set the seal to his liberality. In the phrase of modern auctioneers, he gave up the wild beasts to slaughter "without reserve." It was the custom, in ordinary cases, so far to consider the enormous cost of these far-fetched rarities as to preserve for future occasions those which escaped the arrows of the populace, or survived the bloody combats in which they were engaged. Thus, out of the overflowings of one great exhibition, would be found materials for another. But Pius would not allow of these reservations. All were given up unreservedly to the savage purposes of the spectators; land and sea were ransacked; the sanctuaries of the torrid zone were violated; columns of the army were put in motion—and all for the transient effect of crowning an extra hour with hecatombs of forest blood, each separate minute of which hour had cost a king's ransom.

Yet these displays were alien to the nature of Pius; and even through the tyranny of custom, he had been so little changed, that to the last he continued to turn aside, as often as the public ritual of his duty allowed him, from these fierce spectacles to the gentler amusements of fishing and hunting. His taste and his affections naturally carried him to all domestic pleasures of a quiet nature. A walk in a shrubbery or along a piazza, enlivened with the conversation of a literary friend, pleased him better than all the court festivals; and among festivals, or anniversary celebrations, he preferred those which, like the harvest-home or like the feast of the vintagers, whilst they sanctioned a total carelessness and dismissal of public anxieties, were at the same time coloured by the innocent gaiety which belongs to rural and to patriarchal manners. In person this emperor was tall and dignified (*staturâ elevata decorus*);

but latterly he stooped; to remedy which defect, that he might discharge his public part with the more decorum, he wore stays.* Of his other personal habits little is recorded, except that, early in the morning, and just before receiving the compliments of his friends and dependants (*salutatores*), or what in modern phrase would be called his *levee*, he ate a little plain bread (*panem siccum comedit*), that is, bread without condiments or accompaniments of any kind, by way of breakfast. In no meal has rational luxury improved more upon the model of the ancients than in this: the dinners (*cœnæ*) of the Romans were even more luxurious, and a thousand times more costly, than our own; but their breakfasts were scandalously meagre; and, with many men, breakfast was no acknowledged meal at all. Galen tells us that a little bread, and at most a little seasoning of oil, honey, or dried fruits, was the utmost breakfast which men generally allowed themselves: some indeed drank wine after it, but this was an unusual practice.†

The Emperor Pius died in his seventieth year. The immediate occasion of his death was—not breakfast nor *cœna*, but something of the kind. He had received a present of Alpine cheese, and he ordered some for supper. The trap for his life was baited with toasted cheese. There is no reason to think that he ate immoderately; but that

* In default of whalebone, one is curious to know of what these stays were made: thin tablets of the linden-tree, it appears, were the best materials which the Augustus of that day could command.

† There is, however, a good deal of delusion prevalent on such subjects. In some English cavalry regiments, the custom is [1825] for the privates to take only one meal a day, which of course is dinner; and by some curious experiments it has appeared that such a mode of life is the healthiest. But at the same time, we have ascertained that the quantity of porter or substantial ale drunk in these regiments does virtually allow several meals, by comparison with the washy tea breakfasts of most Englishmen.

night he was seized with indigestion. Delirium followed; during which it is singular that his mind teemed with a class of imagery and of passions the most remote (as it might have been thought) from the voluntary occupations of his thoughts. He raved about the State, and about those kings with whom he was displeased; nor were his thoughts one moment removed from the public service. Yet he was the least ambitious of princes, and his reign was emphatically said to be bloodless. Finding his fever increase, he became sensible that he was dying; and he ordered the golden statue of Prosperity, a household symbol of empire, to be transferred from his own bedroom to that of his successor. Once, again, however, for the last time, he gave the word to the officer of the guard; and, soon after, turning away his face to the wall against which his bed was placed, he passed out of life in the very gentlest sleep, "*quasi dormiret, spiritum reddidit;*" or, as a Greek author expresses it, κατ' ἰσὸν ὑπνῳ τῳ μαλακωτάτῳ, showing an exact conformity in all respects to sleep the very gentlest. He was one of those few Roman emperors whom posterity truly honoured with the title of ἀναίμακτος (or bloodless); *solusque omnium propè principum prorsus sine civili sanguine et hostili vixit.* In the whole tenor of his life and character he was thought to resemble Numa. And Pausanias, after remarking on his title of Εὐσεβής (or Pius), upon the meaning and origin of which there are several different hypotheses, closes with this memorable tribute to his paternal qualities—δοξῃ δὲ ἐμῃ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ τοῦ Κύρου φέροιτο ἂν τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου, Πατὴρ ἀνθρώπων καλουμένος: *but, in my opinion, he should also bear the designation of Cyrus the elder, being hailed as the Father of the Human Race.*

A thoughtful Roman would have been apt to exclaim, *This is too good to last*, upon finding so admirable a ruler

succeeded by one still more admirable, in the person of Marcus Aurelius. From the first dawn of his infancy this prince indicated, by his grave deportment, the philosophic character of his mind; and at eleven years of age he professed himself a formal devotee of philosophy in its strictest form,—assuming the garb, and submitting to its most ascetic ordinances. In particular, he slept upon the ground, and in other respects he practised a style of living the most simple and remote from the habits of rich men [or, in his own words, τὸ λιτὸν κατὰ τὴν δίαιταν, καὶ πόῤῥω τῆς πλουσιακῆς ἀγωγῆς: the simple as regards diet, are far removed from the training of opulence]; though it is true that he himself ascribes this simplicity of life to the influence of his mother, and not to the premature assumption of the stoical character. He pushed his austerities indeed to excess; for Dio mentions that in his boyish days he was reduced to great weakness by exercises too severe, and a diet of too little nutriment. In fact, his whole heart was set upon philosophic attainments, and perhaps upon philosophic glory. All the great philosophers of his own time, whether Stoic or Peripatetic, and amongst them Sextus of Cheronæa, a nephew of Plutarch, were retained as his instructors. There was none whom he did not enrich; and as many as were fitted by birth and manners to fill important situations, he raised to the highest offices in the State.* Philosophy, however, did not so much

* We should all have been much indebted to the philosophic emperor, had he found it convenient to tell us with what result to the public interests, as also to the despatch of business. Napoleon made La Place a Secretary of State, but had reason to rue his appointment. Our own Addison suffered a kind of locked jaw in dictating despatches as foreign Secretary. And about a hundred years earlier Lord Bacon played "H——— and Tommy" when casually raised to the supreme seat in the council by the brief absence in Edinburgh of the king and the Duke of Buckingham.

absorb his affections, but that he found time to cultivate the fine arts (painting he both studied and practised), and such gymnastic exercises as he held consistent with his public dignity. Wrestling, hunting, fowling, playing at cricket (*pila*), he admired and patronized by personal participation. He tried his powers even as a runner. But with these tasks, and entering critically, both as a connoisseur and as a practising amateur, into such trials of skill, so little did he relish the very same spectacles, when connected with the cruel exhibitions of the circus and amphitheatre, that it was not without some friendly violence on the part of those who could venture on such a liberty, nor even thus perhaps, without the coercion of his official station, that he would be persuaded to visit either one or the other.* In this he meditated no reflection upon his

* So much improvement had Christianity already accomplished in the feelings of men since the time of Augustus. That prince, in whose reign the Founder of this ennobling religion was born, had delighted so much and indulged so freely in the spectacles of the amphitheatre, that Mæcenas summoned him reproachfully to leave them by saying, "Surgo tandem, carnifex:" Rise, headsman; rise hangman at last.

It is the remark of Capitoline, that "gladiatoria spectacula omnifariam temperavit; temperavit etiam scenicas donationes;"—he controlled in every possible way the gladiatorial spectacles; he controlled also the rates of allowance to the stage performers In these latter reforms, which simply restrained the exorbitant salaries of a class dedicated to the public pleasures, and unprofitable to the state, Marcus may have had no further view than that which is usually connected with sumptuary laws. But in the restraints upon the gladiators, it is not impossible to believe that his highest purpose was that of elevating human nature, and preparing the way for still higher regulations. As little can it be believed that this lofty conception, and the sense of a degradation entailed upon human nature itself, in the spectacle of human beings matched against each other like brute beasts, and pouring out their blood upon the arena as a libation to the caprices of a mob, could have been derived from any other source than the contagion of Christian standards and

father by adoption, the Emperor Pius (who also, for aught we know, might secretly revolt from a species of amusement which, as the prescriptive test of munificence in the popular estimate, he found it unavoidable to support); on the contrary, he obeyed him with the punctiliousness of a

Christian sentiments, then beginning to pervade and ventilate the atmosphere of society in its higher and philosophic regions. Christianity, without expressly affirming, everywhere indirectly supposes and presumes the infinite value and dignity of man as a creature, exclusively concerned in a vast and mysterious economy of restoration to a state of moral beauty and power in some former age mysteriously forfeited Equally interested in its benefits, joint-heirs of its promises, all men, of every colour, language, and rank, Gentile or Jew, were here first represented as in one sense (and that the most important) equal; in the eye of this religion, they were, by necessity of logic, equal, as equal participators in the ruin, equal in the restoration. Here first, in any available sense, was communicated to the standard of human nature a vast and sudden elevation; and reasonable enough it is to suppose, that some obscure sense of this, some sympathy with the great changes for man then beginning to operate, would first of all reach the inquisitive students of philosophy, and chiefly those in high stations, who cultivated an intercourse with all the men of original genius throughout the civilized world. The Emperor Hadrian had taken one solitary step (already noticed) in the elevation of human nature; and not, we may believe, without some sub-conscious influence received directly or indirectly from Christianity. So again, with respect to Marcus, it is hardly conceivable that he, a prince so indulgent and popular, could have thwarted, and violently gainsaid, a passionate taste of the Roman populace, without some adequate motive; and none *could* be adequate which was not built upon some new and exalted views of human nature, with which these gladiatorial sacrifices were altogether at war. The reforms which Marcus introduced into these "crudelissima spectacula," all having the common purpose of limiting their extent, were three. First, he set bounds to the extreme cost of these exhibitions; no man was any longer at liberty to lavish an *unlimited* sum upon the amphitheatre; and this restriction of the cost covertly operated as a restriction of the practice. The limitation operated as a withdrawal of State *Bounties*, as refrigerations of enthusiasm, as curbs upon aristocratic rivalships.

Roman obedience; he watched the very motions of his countenance; and he waited so continually upon his pleasure, that for three-and-twenty years which they lived together, he is recorded to have slept out of his father's palace only for two nights. This rigour of filial duty illus-

Secondly, and this ordinance took effect whenever he was personally present, if not oftener, he commanded, on great occasions, that these displays should be bloodless. Dion Cassius notices this fact in the following words:—"The Emperor Marcus was so far from taking delight in spectacles of bloodshed, that even the gladiators in Rome could not obtain his inspection of their contests, unless, like the wrestlers, they contended without imminent risk; for he never allowed them the use of sharpened weapons, but universally they fought before him with weapons previously blunted," or perhaps *buttoned*, fibulated, as in the case of our own *foils*. Thirdly, he repealed the old and uniform regulation, which secured to the gladiators a perpetual immunity from military service. This necessarily diminished their available amount. Being now liable to serve their country usefully in the field of battle, whilst the concurrent limitation of the expenses in this direction prevented any commensurate increase of their numbers, they were so much the less disposable in aid of the public luxury. Thus, by the drains of the military service, when turning round to look for adequate supplementary accessions from abroad, they found the requisite supplies cut off by the action of the new sumptuary law. *Habet!* ejaculated the neutral philosophic looker-on, simply regarding the gladiatorial interest.* His fatherly care of all classes, and the universal benignity with which he attempted to raise the abject estimate and condition of even the lowest *Pariahs* in his vast empire, appears in another little anecdote, relating to a class of men equally with the gladiators given up to the service of luxury in a haughty and cruel populace. Attending one day at an exhibition of rope-dancing, one of the performers (a boy) fell and hurt himself; from which time the paternal emperor would never allow the rope-dancers to perform without mattresses or featherbeds spread below, to mitigate the violence of their falls.

* "*Habet*"—He has it, he has got it—*i. e.*, has got his death-warrant, was the cruel ejaculation of triumph from the Roman mob of spectators whenever a poor gladiator was [or seemed to be] reached by some mortal blow. The self-same yell of triumph we are supposing to have ascended from the Miso-gladiatorial party on witnessing the unparried blow of the philosophic emperor.

trates a feature of Roman life; for such was the sanctity of law, that a father created by legal fiction was in all respects treated with the same veneration and affection, as a father who claimed upon the most unquestioned footing of natural right. Such, however, is the universal baseness of courts, that even this scrupulous and minute attention to his duties did not protect Marcus from the injurious insinuations of whisperers. There were not wanting persons who endeavoured to turn to account the general circumstances in the situation of the Cæsar, which pointed him out to the jealousy of the emperor. But these being no more than what adhere necessarily to the case of every heir *as* such, and meeting fortunately with as little of encouragement in the unsuspicious nature of the father as they did of countenance in the habitual conduct of the son, prospered so ill, that from pure defect of all natural root on either side, the very attempts of court malice died away.

The most interesting political crisis in the reign of Marcus was the war in Germany with the Marcomanni, concurrently with pestilence in Rome. The agitation of the public mind was intense; and prophets arose, as since under corresponding circumstances in Christian countries, who announced the approaching dissolution of the world. The purse of Marcus was open, as usual, to the distresses of his subjects. But it was chiefly for the expense of funerals that his aid was claimed. In this way he alleviated the domestic calamities of his capital, or expressed his sympathy with the sufferers, where alleviation was beyond his power; whilst, by the energy of his movements and his personal presence on the Danube, he soon dissipated those anxieties of Rome which pointed in a foreign direction. The war, however, had been a dreadful one; and it had excited such just fears in the most experienced heads of the State, that,

happening in its outbreak to coincide with a Parthian attack, it was skilfully protracted until the entire thunders of Rome, and the undivided energies of her supreme captains, could be concentrated upon this single point. Both* emperors left Rome, and crossed the Alps; the war was thrown back upon its native seats—Austria and the modern Hungary: great battles were fought and won; and peace, with consequent relief and restoration to liberty, was reconquered for many friendly nations, who had suffered under the ravages of the Marcomanni, the Sarmatians, the Quadi, and the Vandals; whilst some of the hostile people were nearly obliterated from the map, and their names blotted out from the memory of men.

Since the days of Gaul as an independent power, no war had so much alarmed the people of Rome; and their fear was justified by the difficulties and prodigious efforts which accompanied its suppression. The public treasury was exhausted; loans were an engine of fiscal policy, not then understood or perhaps practicable; and great distress was at hand for the State. In these circumstances, Marcus adopted a wise (though it was then esteemed a violent or desperate) remedy. Time and excessive luxury had accumulated in the imperial palaces and villas vast repositories of apparel, furniture, jewels, pictures, and household utensils, valuable alike for the materials and the workmanship. Many of these articles were consecrated, by colour † or

* Marcus had been associated, as Cæsar and as emperor, with the son of the late beautiful Verus, who is usually mentioned by the same name.

† "*By colour*:"—It must be remembered that the true *purple* (about which the controversy has been endless, and is yet unsettled—possibly it was our *crimson*, though this seems properly expressed by the word *puniceus*; possibly it was our common *violet*; but of whatever tint, this colour of purple) was interdicted to the Roman

otherwise, to the use of the *sacred* household ; and to have been found in possession of them, or with the materials for making them, would have entailed the penalties of treason. All these stores were now brought out to open day, and put up to public sale by auction, free license being first granted to the bidders, whoever they might be, to use, and otherwise to exercise the fullest rights of ownership upon all they bought. The auction lasted for two months. Every man was guaranteed in the peaceable possession of his purchases. And afterwards, when the public distress had passed over, a still further indulgence was extended to the purchasers. Notice was given that all who were dissatisfied with their purchases, or who for other reasons might wish to recover their cost, would receive back the purchase-money, upon returning the articles. Dinner-services of gold and crystal, murrhine vases,* and even his wife's wardrobe of silken robes

people, and consecrated to the sole personal use of the imperatorial house. Recollecting the early "taboo" in this point amongst the children of Romulus, and that thus far it had not been suspended under the two gentlest and most philosophic princes of the *divina domus*, we feel that some injustice has, perhaps, been done to Dioclesian in representing *him* as the importer of oriental degradations.

* "*Murrhine vases:*"—What might these Pagan articles be? Unlearned reader, if any such is amongst the flock of our audience, the question you ask has been asked by four or five centuries that have fleeted away, and hitherto has had no answer. They were not porcelain from China; they could not be Venetian glass, into which, when poison was poured, suddenly the venom fermented, bubbled, boiled, and finally shivered the glass into fragments (so at least saith the pretty fable of our ancestors); this it *could* not be: why? Because Venice herself did not arise until two and a half centuries after Marcus Aurelius. They were however like diaphanous china, but did not break on falling. The Japanese still possess a sort of porcelain much superior to any now produced in China. And by Chinese confession, a far superior order of porcelain was long ago manufactured in China itself, of which the art is now wholly lost.

interwoven with gold, all these, and countless other articles, were under this offer returned, and the full auction prices paid back; or were *not* returned, and no displeasure shown to those who publicly displayed them as their own. Having gone so far, overruled by the necessities of the public service, in breaking down those legal barriers by which a peculiar dress, furniture, equipage, &c., were appropriated to the imperial house, as distinguished from the very highest of the noble houses, Marcus had a sufficient pretext for extending indefinitely the effect of the dispensation then granted. Articles purchased at the auction bore no characteristic marks to distinguish them from others of the same form and texture: so that a license to use any one article of the *sacred* pattern, became necessarily a general license for all others which resembled them. And thus, without abrogating the prejudices which protected the imperial precedency, a body of sumptuary laws—the most ruinous to the progress of manufacturing skill * which has ever been devised—were silently suspended. One or two aspiring families might be offended by these innovations, which meantime gave the pleasures of enjoyment to thousands, and of hope to millions.

But these, though very noticeable relaxations of the existing prerogative, were, as respected the temper which dictated them, no more than everyday manifestations of the emperor's perpetual benignity. Fortunately for Marcus, the indestructible privilege of the *divina domus* exalted it

Perhaps the murrhine vase might belong to this forgotten class of vertu.

* Because the most effectual extinguishers of all ambition applied in that direction; since the very excellence of any particular fabric was the surest pledge of its virtual suppression by means of its legal restriction (which followed inevitably) to the use of the imperial house.

so unapproachably beyond all competition, that no possible remissions of aulic rigour could ever be misinterpreted; fear there could be none, lest such paternal indulgences should lose their effect and acceptation as pure condescensions. They could neither injure their author, who was otherwise charmed and consecrated from disrespect; nor could they suffer injury themselves by misconstruction, or seem other than sincere, coming from a prince whose entire life was one long series of acts expressing the same affable spirit. Such, indeed, was the effect of this uninterrupted benevolence in the emperor, that at length all men, according to their several ages, hailed him as their father, son, or brother. And when he died, in the sixty-first year of his life (the eighteenth of his reign), he was lamented with a corresponding peculiarity in the public ceremonial, such, for instance, as the studied interfusion of the senatorial body with the populace, expressive of the levelling power of a true and comprehensive grief; a peculiarity for which no precedent was found, and which never afterwards became itself a precedent for similar honours to the best of his successors.

But malice has the divine privilege of ubiquity; and therefore it was that even this great model of private and public virtue did not escape the foulest libels: he was twice accused of murder; once on the person of a gladiator, with whom the empress is said to have intrigued; and again, upon his associate in the empire, who died in reality of an apoplectic seizure on his return from the German campaign. Neither of these atrocious fictions ever gained the least hold of the public attention, so entirely were they put down by the *primâ facie* evidence of facts, and of the emperor's notorious character. In fact his faults, if he had any in his public life, were entirely those of too much indulgence.

In a few cases of enormous guilt, it is recorded that he showed himself inexorable. But, generally speaking, he was far otherwise; and, in particular, he carried his indulgence to his wife's vices so far beyond the allowance of prudence or public decorum, as to draw upon himself the satirical notice of the stage.

The gladiators, and still more the sailors of that age, were constantly to be seen plying naked; and Faustina was shameless enough to take her station in places which gave her the advantages of a leisurely review; and she actually selected favourites from both classes on the ground of a personal inspection. With others of greater rank she is said even to have been surprised by her husband; in particular with one called Tertullus, at dinner.* But to all remonstrances on this subject, Marcus is reported to have replied, "*Si uxorem dimittimus, reddamus et dotem;*" meaning that, having received his right of succession to the empire simply by his adoption into the family of Pius, his wife's father, gratitude and filial duty obliged him to view any dishonours emanating from his wife's conduct as joint legacies with the splendours inherited from their common father; in short, that he was not at liberty to separate the rose from its thorns. Faustina had, in fact, brought him the empire as her bridal dowry; and according to the notorious law of divorce in Rome, the repudiated wife carried back all that she had brought. However, the facts are not sufficiently known to warrant us in criticising very severely his beha-

* Upon which some *mimographus* built an occasional notice of the scandal then floating on the public breath in the following terms: One of the actors having asked, "*Who was the adulterous paramour?*" receives for answer, "*Tullus.*" "Who?" he asks again; and again for three times running he is answered, "*Tullus.*" But asking a fourth time, the rejoinder is, "Jam dixi *ter Tullus*" (*i.e.* Tertullus.)

viour on so trying an occasion. It would be too much for human frailty, that absolutely no stain should remain upon his memory. The reflection upon this story by one of his biographers is this—"Such is the force of daily life in a good ruler, so great the power of his sanctity, gentleness, and piety, that no breath of slander or invidious suggestion from an acquaintance can avail to sully his memory. In short, to Antonine, immutable as the heavens in the tenor of his own life, and in the manifestations of his own moral temper, and who was not by possibility liable to any impulse or movement of change, on any alien suggestion, it was not eventually an injury that he was dishonoured by some of his connexions; on him, invulnerable in his own character, neither a harlot for his wife, nor a gladiator for his son, could inflict a wound. Then as now, O sacred lord Dioclesian! he was reputed a god; not as others are reputed, but specially and in a separate sense, and with a privilege to such worship from all men as is addressed to his memory by yourself, who often breathe a wish to heaven, that you were or could be such in life and merciful disposition as was Marcus Aurelius."

What this encomiast says in a rhetorical tone was literally true. Marcus was raised to divine honours, or canonized * (as in Christian phrase we might express it). That was a matter of course for a Cæsar; and, considering with

* In reality, if by *divus* and *divine honours* we understand a saint, or spiritualized being having a right of intercession with the Supreme Deity; and by his temple, &c., if we understand a shrine attended by a priest to direct the prayers of his devotees, there is no such wide chasm between this pagan superstition and the adoration of saints in the Romish church, as at first sight appears. The fault is purely in the names: *divus* and *templum* are words too undistinguishing and generic.

whom he shared such honours, they are of little account in expressing the grief and veneration which followed him. A circumstance more characteristic, in the record of those observances which attested the public feeling, is this—that he who at that time had no bust, picture, or statue of Marcus in his house, was looked upon as a profane and irreligious man. Finally, to do him honour not by testimonies of men's opinions in his favour, but by facts of his own life and conduct, one memorable trophy there is amongst the moral distinctions of the philosophic Cæsar, utterly unnoticed hitherto by historians, but which will hereafter obtain a conspicuous place in any perfect record of the steps by which civilisation has advanced, and human nature has been exalted. It is this: Marcus Aurelius was the first great military leader (and his civil office as supreme interpreter and creator of law consecrated his example) who allowed rights indefeasible, rights uncancelled by his misfortune in the field, to the prisoner of war. Others had been merciful and variously indulgent, upon their own discretion, and upon a random impulse to some, or possibly to all of their prisoners; but this was either in submission to the usage of that particular war, or to special self-interest, or at most to individual good feeling. None had allowed a prisoner to challenge any forbearance as of right. But Marcus Aurelius first resolutely maintained that certain indestructible rights adhered to every soldier, simply as a man, which rights, capture by the sword, or any other accident of war, could do nothing to shake or to diminish. We have noticed other instances in which Marcus Aurelius laboured, at the risk of his popularity, to elevate the condition of human nature. But those, though equally expressing the goodness and loftiness of his nature, were by accident directed to a perishable institution, which time

has swept away, and along with it therefore his reformations. Here, however, is an immortal act of goodness built upon an immortal basis; so long as armies congregate, and the sword is the arbiter of international quarrels, so long it will deserve to be had in remembrance, that the first man who set limits to the empire of wrong, and first translated within the jurisdiction of man's moral nature that state of war which had heretofore been consigned, by principle no less than by practice, to anarchy, animal violence, and brute force, was also the first philosopher who sat upon a throne.

In this, and in his universal spirit of forgiveness, we cannot but acknowledge a Christian by anticipation; nor can we hesitate to believe, that through one or other of his many philosophic friends,* whose attention Chris-

* Not long after this, Alexander Severus meditated a temple to Christ; upon which design Lampridius observes,—*Quod et Hadrianus cogitâsse fertur;* and, as Lampridius was himself a pagan, we believe him to have been right in his report, in spite of all which has been written by Casaubon and others, who maintain that these imperfect temples of Hadrian were left void of all images or idols,—not in respect to the Christian practice, but because he designed them eventually to be dedicated to himself. However, be this as it may, thus much appears on the face of the story,—that Christ and Christianity had by that time begun to challenge the imperial attention; and of this there is an indirect indication, as it has been interpreted, even in the memoir of Marcus himself. The passage is this: "Fama fuit sanè quod sub philosophorum specie quidam rempublicam vexarent et privatos." The *philosophi*, here mentioned by Capitoline, are by some supposed to be the Christians; and for many reasons we believe it; and we understand the molestations of the public services and of private individuals, here charged upon them, as a very natural reference to the Christian doctrines falsely understood. There is, by the way, a fine remark upon Christianity, made by an infidel philosopher of Germany, which suggests a remarkable feature in the merits of Marcus Aurelius. There were, as this German philosopher used to observe, two schemes of thinking

tianity was by that time powerful to attract, some reflex images of Christian doctrines—some half-conscious perception of its perfect beauty—had flashed upon his mind. And when we view him from this distant age, as heading that shining array, the Howards and the Clarksons, who have since then in a practical sense hearkened to the sighs of "all prisoners and captives"—we are ready to suppose

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amongst the ancients, which severally fulfilled the two functions of a sound philosophy, as respected the moral nature of man. One of these schemes presented us with a just ideal of moral excellence, a standard sufficiently exalted: this was the Stoic philosophy; and thus far its pretensions were unexceptionable and perfect. But unfortunately, whilst contemplating this pure ideal of man as he ought to be, the Stoic totally forgot the frail nature of man as he is; and by refusing all compromises and all condescensions to human infirmity, this philosophy of the Porch presented to us a brilliant prize and object for our efforts, but placed on an inaccessible height.

On the other hand, there was a very different philosophy at the very antagonist pole,—not binding itself by abstractions too elevated, submitting to what it finds, bending to the absolute facts and realities of man's nature, and affably adapting itself to human imperfections This was the philosophy of Epicurus; and undoubtedly, as a beginning, and for the elementary purpose of conciliating the affections of the pupil, it was well devised; but here the misfortune was, that the ideal or *maximum perfectionis* attainable by human nature, was pitched so low, that the humility of its condescensions and the excellence of its means were all to no purpose, as leading to nothing further. One mode presented a splendid end, but insulated, and with no means fitted to a human aspirant for communicating with its splendours; the other, an excellent road, but leading to no worthy or proportionate end. Yet these, as regarded models, were the best and ultimate achievements of the pagan world. Now, Christianity, said he, is the synthesis of whatever is separately excellent in either. It will abate as little as the haughtiest Stoicism of the ideal which it contemplates as the first postulate of true morality; the absolute holiness and purity which it demands are as much raised above the poor performances of actual man, as the absolute wisdom and impeccability of the Stoic. Yet, unlike the Stoic scheme, Christianity is aware of the necessity, and provides for it, that the means of appro-

him addressed by the great Founder of Christianity, in the words of Scripture, "*Verily, I say unto thee, Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven.*"

As a supplement to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, we ought to notice the rise of one great rebel, the sole civil disturber of his time, in Syria. This was Avidius Cassius, whose descent from Cassius (the noted conspirator against

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priating this ideal perfection should be such as are consistent with the nature of a most erring and imperfect creature. Its motion is *towards* the divine, but *by* and *through* the human. In fact, it offers the Stoic humanized in his scheme of means, and the Epicurean exalted in his final objects. Nor is it possible to conceive a practicable scheme of morals which should not rest upon such a synthesis of the two elements as the Christian scheme presents—a mighty ideal; nor any other mode of fulfilling that demand than such a one as is there first brought forward, viz., a double or Janus nature, which stands in an equivocal relation,—to the Divine nature by his actual perfections, to the human nature by his participation in the same animal frailties and capacities of fleshly temptation. No other vinculum could bind the two postulates together, of an absolute perfection in the end proposed, and yet of utter imperfection in the means for attaining it.

Such was the outline of this famous tribute by an unbelieving philosopher to the merits of Christianity as a scheme of moral discipline. Now, it must be remembered that Marcus Aurelius was by profession a Stoic; and that generally, as a theoretical philosopher, but still more as a Stoic philosopher, he might be supposed incapable of descending from these airy altitudes of speculation to the true needs, infirmities, and capacities of human nature. Yet strange it is, that he, of all the good emperors, was the most thoroughly human and practical. In evidence of which, one body of records is amply sufficient, which is the very extensive and wise reforms which he, beyond all the Cæsars, executed in the existing laws. To all the exigencies of the times, and to all the new necessities developed by the progress of society, he adjusted the old laws, or supplied new ones. The same praise, therefore, belongs to him, which the German philosopher conceded to Christianity, of reconciling the austerest ideal with the practical; and hence another argument for presuming him half baptized into the new faith.

the Dictator, Julius) seems to have suggested to him a wandering idea, and at length a formal purpose, of restoring the ancient republic. Avidius was the commander-in-chief of the Oriental army, whose head-quarters were then fixed at Antioch. His native disposition, which inclined him to cruelty, and his political views, made him, from his first entrance upon office, a severe disciplinarian. The well-known enormities of the neighbouring Daphne gave him ample opportunities for the exercise of his harsh propensities in reforming the dissolute soldiery. He amputated heads, arms, feet, and hands: he turned out his mutilated victims, as walking spectacles of warning; he burned them; he smoked them to death; and, in one instance, he crucified a detachment of his army, together with their centurions, for having, unauthorized, gained a decisive victory, and captured a large booty on the Danube. Upon this the soldiers mutinied against him, in mere indignation at his tyranny. However, he prosecuted his purpose, and prevailed, by his bold contempt of the danger which menaced him. From the abuses in the army, he proceeded to attack the abuses of the civil administration. But as these were protected by the example of the great proconsular lieutenants and provincial governors, policy obliged him to confine himself to verbal expressions of anger; until at length, sensible that this impotent railing did but expose him to contempt, he resolved to arm himself with the powers of radical reform by open rebellion. His ultimate purpose was the restoration of the ancient republic, or (as he himself expresses it in an interesting letter, which yet survives), "*ut in antiquum statum publica forma reddatur;*" *i. e.*, that the constitution should be restored to its original condition. And this must be effected by military violence and the aid of the executioner,

or, in his own words, *multis gladiis, multis elogiis* * (by innumerable sabres, by innumerable records of condemnation). Against this man, Marcus was warned by his imperial colleague Lucius Verus, in a very remarkable letter. After expressing his suspicions of him generally, the writer goes on to say—"I would you had him closely watched. For he is a general disliker of us and of our doings; he is gathering together an enormous treasure, and he makes an open jest of our literary pursuits. You, for instance, he calls a philosophizing old woman, and me a dissolute buffoon and scamp. Consider what you would have done. For my part, I bear the fellow no ill-will; but again, I say, take care that he does not do a mischief to yourself or your children."

The answer of Marcus is noble and characteristic: "I have read your letter, and I will confess to you I think it more scrupulously timid than becomes an emperor, and timid in a way unsuited to the spirit of our times. Consider this —if the empire is destined to Cassius by the decrees of Providence, in that case it will not be in our power to put him to death, however much we may desire to do so. You know your great-grandfather's saying, 'No prince ever killed his own heir;' no man, that is, ever yet prevailed against one whom Providence had marked out as his successor. On the other hand, if Providence opposes him, then, without any cruelty on our part, he will spontaneously fall into some snare spread for him by destiny. Besides, we cannot treat a man as under impeachment whom nobody impeaches, and whom, by your own confession, the soldiers love. Then again, in cases of high treason, even those criminals who are

* "*Elogiis*:"—The elogium was the public record or *titulus* of a malefactor's crime inscribed upon his cross or scaffold.

convicted upon the clearest evidence, yet, as friendless and deserted persons contending against the powerful, and matched against men armed with the whole authority of the State, seem to suffer some wrong. You remember what your grandfather said—'Wretched, indeed, is the fate of princes, who then first obtain credit in any charges of conspiracy which they allege, when they happen to seal the validity of their charges against the plotters, by falling martyrs to the plot.' Domitian it was, in fact, who first uttered this truth; but I choose rather to place it under the authority of Hadrian, because the sayings of tyrants, even when they are true and happy, carry less weight with them than naturally they ought. For Cassius, then, let him keep his present temper and inclinations; and the more so, being (as he is) a good general, austere in his discipline, brave, and one whom the State cannot afford to lose. For as to what you insinuate, that I ought to provide for my children's interests, by putting this man judicially out of the way, very frankly I say to you—'Perish my children, if Avidius shall deserve more attachment than they, and if it shall prove salutary to the State that Cassius should triumph rather than the children of Marcus should survive.'"

This letter affords a singular illustration of fatalism, such certainly as we might expect in a Stoic, but carried even to a Turkish excess; and not theoretically professed only, but practically acted upon in a case of capital hazard. *That no prince ever killed his own successor*, *i.e.*, that it was vain for a prince to put conspirators to death, because, by the very possibility of doing so, a demonstration is obtained that such conspirators had never been destined to prosper, is as pungent an expression of fatalism as ever has been devised. The rest of the letter, where not imbecile, is noble, and breathes the very soul of careless magnanimity reposing upon

conscious innocence. Meantime, Cassius increased in power and influence: his army had become a most formidable engine of his ambition through its restored discipline; and his own authority was sevenfold greater, because he had himself created that discipline in the face of unequalled temptations hourly renewed and rooted in the very centre of his head-quarters. "Daphne, by Orontes," a suburb of Antioch, was infamous for its seductions; and *Daphnic luxury* had become proverbial for expressing an excess of voluptuousness, such as other places could not rival by mere defect of means, and preparations elaborate enough to sustain it in all its varieties of mode, or to conceal it from public notice. In the very purlieus of this great nest, or sty of sensuality, within sight and touch of its pollutions, did he keep his army fiercely reined up, daring and defying them, as it were, to taste of the banquet whose very odour they inhaled.

Thus provided with the means, and improved instruments for executing his purpose, he broke out into open rebellion; and, though hostile to the *principatus*, or personal supremacy of one man, he did not feel his republican purism at all wounded by the style and title of *Imperator*,—that being a military term, and a mere titular honour, which had co-existed with the severest forms of republicanism. *Imperator*, then, he was saluted and proclaimed; and doubtless the writer of the warning letter from Syria would now declare that the sequel had justified the fears which Marcus had thought so unbecoming to a Roman emperor. But again Marcus would have said, "Let us wait for the sequel of the sequel," and that would have justified him. It is often found by experience that men, who have learned to reverence a person in authority chiefly by his offices of correction applied to their own aberrations—who have known and feared him,

in short, in his character of reformer—will be more than usually inclined to desert him on his first movement in the direction of wrong. Their obedience being founded on fear, and fear being never wholly disconnected from hatred, they naturally seize with eagerness upon the first lawful pretext for disobedience; the luxury of revenge is, in such a case, too potent—a meritorious disobedience too novel a temptation—to have a chance of being rejected. Never, indeed. does erring human nature look more abject than in the person of a severe exactor of duty, who has immolated thousands to the wrath of offended law, suddenly himself becoming a capital offender, a glozing tempter in search of accomplices, and in that character at once standing before the meanest of his own dependants as a self-deposed officer, liable to any man's arrest. The stern and haughty Cassius, who had so often tightened the cords of discipline until they threatened to snap asunder, now found, experimentally, the bitterness of these obvious truths. The trembling sentinel now looked insolently in his face; the cowering legionary, with whom "to hear was to obey," now mused or even bandied words upon his orders; the great lieutenants of his office, who stood next to his own person in authority, were preparing for revolt, open or secret, as circumstances should prescribe; not the accuser only, but the very avenger, was upon his steps; Nemesis, that Nemesis who once so closely adhered to the name and fortunes of the lawful Caesar, turning against every one of his assassins* the edge of his own assassinating sword, was already at his heels; and in the midst of a sudden prosperity, and its accompanying

* "*Turning against every one of his assassins:*"—It was a general belief at the time that each individual among the murderers of Cæsar had died by his own sword.

shouts of gratulation, he heard the sullen knells of approaching death. Antioch, it was true, the great Roman capital of the Orient, bore him, for certain motives of self-interest, peculiar good-will. But there was no city of the world in which the Roman Cæsar did not reckon many liege-men and partisans. And the very hands, which dressed his altars and crowned his Prætorian pavilion, might not improbably in that same hour put an edge upon the sabre which was to avenge the injuries of the too indulgent and long-suffering Antoninus. Meantime, to give a colour of patriotism to his treason, Cassius alleged public motives; in a letter, which he wrote after assuming the purple, he says: "Wretched empire, miserable state, which endures these hungry blood-suckers battening on her vitals!—A worthy man, doubtless, is Marcus; who, in his eagerness to be reputed clement, suffers those to live whose conduct he himself abhors. Where is that L. Cassius, whose name I vainly inherit? Where is that Marcus—not Aurelius, mark you, but Cato Censorius? Where the good old discipline of ancestral times, long since indeed disused, but now not so much as yearned for in our aspirations? Marcus Antoninus is a scholar; he enacts the philosopher; and he tries conclusions upon the four elements, and upon the nature of the soul; and he discourses learnedly upon the *Honestum;* and concerning the *Summum Bonum* he is unanswerable. Meanwhile, is he learned in the interests of the State? Can he argue a point upon the public economy? you see what a host of sabres is required, what a host of impeachments, sentences, executions, before the commonwealth can reassume its ancient integrity!* What! shall I esteem as proconsuls, as governors, those who for that end only deem themselves invested with lieutenancies

* In these words we hear the very spirit of Robespierre.

or great senatorial appointments, that they may gorge themselves with the provincial luxuries and wealth? No doubt you heard in what way our friend the philosopher gave the place of prætorian prefect to one who but three days before was a bankrupt—insolvent, by G—! and a beggar. But be you content: that same gentleman is now as rich as a prefect should be; and has been so, I tell you, any time these three days. And how, I pray you, how; how, my good sir? How but out of the bowels of the provinces, and the marrow of their bones? But no matter, let them be rich; let them be blood-suckers; so much, God willing! shall they regorge into the treasury of the empire. Let but Heaven smile upon our party, and the Cassiani shall restore to the republic its old impersonal supremacy."

But heaven did *not* smile; nor did man. Rome heard with bitter indignation of this old traitor's ingratitude, and his false mask of republican civism. Excepting Marcus Aurelius himself, not one man but thirsted for revenge. And that was soon obtained. He and all his supporters, one after the other, rapidly fell (as Marcus had predicted) into snares laid by the officers who continued true to their allegiance. Except the family and household of Cassius, there remained in a short time none for the vengeance of the Senate, or for the mercy of the emperor. In *them* centred the last arrears of hope and fear, of chastisement or pardon, depending upon this memorable revolt. And about the disposal of their persons arose the final question to which the case gave birth. The letters yet remain in which the several parties interested gave utterance to the passions which possessed them. Faustina, the empress, urged her husband with feminine violence to adopt against his prisoners comprehensive acts of vengeance. "Noli parcere hominibus," says she, "qui tibi non pepercerunt; et nec

mihi nec filiis nostris parcerent* si vicissent." And elsewhere she irritates his wrath against the army as accomplices for the time, and as a body of men "qui, nisi opprimuntur, opprimunt." We may be sure of the result. After commending her zeal for her own family, he says, "Ego vero et ejus liberis parcam, et genero, et uxori; et ad senatum scribam ne aut proscriptio gravior sit, aut pœna crudelior;" adding that, had his counsels prevailed, not even Cassius himself should have perished. As to his relatives, "Why," he asks, "should I speak of pardon to them, who indeed have done no wrong, and are blameless even in purpose?" Accordingly, his letter of intercession to the Senate protests, that, so far from asking for further victims to the crime of Avidius Cassius, would to God he could call back from the dead many of those who had fallen! With immense applause, and with turbulent acclamations, the Senate granted all his requests "in consideration of his philosophy, of his long-suffering, of his learning and accomplishments, of his nobility, of his innocence." And until a monster arose who delighted in the blood of the guiltless, it is recorded that the posterity of Avidius Cassius lived in security, and were admitted to honours and public distinctions by favour of him whose life and empire that memorable traitor had sought to undermine, under the favour of his guileless master's too confiding magnanimity.

* "*Parcerent:*"—She means *pepercissent.* "Don't," she says, "show mercy to man that showed none to you, nor would have shown any to me or my sons in case they had gained the victory."

CHAPTER V.

The Roman empire, and the Roman emperors, it might naturally be supposed by one who had not as yet traversed that tremendous chapter in the history of man, would be likely to present a separate and almost equal interest. The empire, in the first place, as the most magnificent monument of human power which our planet has beheld, must for that single reason, even though its records were otherwise of little interest, fix upon itself the very keenest gaze from all succeeding ages to the end of time. To trace the fortunes and revolutions of that unrivalled monarchy over which the Roman eagle brooded ; to follow the dilapidations of that aërial arch, which silently and steadily through seven centuries ascended under the colossal architecture of the children of Romulus ; to watch the collapse of the Cyclopean masonry, and step by step to see paralysis stealing over the once perfect cohesion of the republican creations, cannot but insure a severe, though melancholy delight. On its own separate account, the decline of this throne-shattering power must and will engage the foremost place amongst all historical reviews. The "disliming" and unmoulding of some mighty pageantry in the heavens has its own appropriate grandeurs, no less than the gathering of its cloudy pomps. The going down of the sun is contemplated with no less awe than his rising. Nor is anything porten-

tous in its growth, which is not also portentous in the steps and "moments" of its decay. Hence, in the second place, we might presume a commensurate interest in the characters and fortunes of the successive emperors. If the empire challenged our first survey, the next would seem due to the Cæsars who guided its course; to the great ones who retarded, and to the bad ones who precipitated its ruin.

Such might be the natural expectation of an inexperienced reader. But it is *not* so. The Cæsars, throughout their long line, are not interesting; neither personally in themselves, nor derivatively from the tragic events to which their history is attached. Their whole interest lies in their situation—in the unapproachable altitude of their thrones. But, considered with a reference to their human qualities, scarcely one in the whole series, except the first, can be viewed with a human interest apart from the circumstances of his position. "Come like shadows, so depart!" The reason for this defect of all personal variety of interest in these enormous potentates, must be sought in the constitution of their power and the very necessities of their office. Even the greatest among them, those who by way of distinction were called *the Great*, as Constantine and Theodosius, were not great, for they were not magnanimous; nor could they be so under *their* tenure of power, which made it a duty to be suspicious, and, by fastening on all varieties of original temper one dire necessity of bloodshed, extinguished under this monotonous cloud of cruel jealousy and everlasting panic every characteristic feature of genial human nature, that would else have emerged through so long a train of princes. There is a remarkable story told of Agrippina, that, upon some occasion, when a wizard announced to her, as truths which he had read in the heavens, the two fatal necessities impending over

her son ; one that he should ascend to empire, the other that he should murder herself, she replied in these stern and memorable words :—*Occidat dum imperet ;* let him murder me, provided he rises to empire. Upon which a continental writer comments thus : "Never before or since have there such words issued from the lips of woman ; and in truth, one knows not which most to abominate or to admire —the aspiring princess or the loving mother. Meantime, in these few words lies naked to the day, in its whole hideous deformity, the very essence of Romanism and the imperatorial power, and one might here consider the mother of Nero as the impersonation of that monstrous condition."

This is true : *Occidat dum imperet,* was the watchword and very cognisance of the Roman imperator. But almost equally it was his watchword—*Occidatur dum imperet.* Doing or suffering, the Cæsars were almost equally involved in bloodshed ; few indeed of the Cæsars were not murderers, and nearly all were themselves murdered.

The empire, then, must be regarded as the primary object of our interest ; and it is in this way only that any secondary interest arises for the emperors. Now, with respect to the empire, the first question which presents itself is—Whence, that is, from what causes and from what era, are we to date its decline ? Gibbon, as we all know, dates it from the reign of Commodus, the son of that merciful Marcus Aurelius Antoninus whom we have just quitted, but certainly upon no sufficient or even plausible grounds. Our own opinion we shall state boldly ; the empire itself, from the very era of its establishment, was one long decline of the Roman power. A vast monarchy had been created and consolidated by the all-conquering instincts of a republic cradled and nursed in wars, and essentially war-

like by means of all its institutions* and by the habits of the people. This monarchy had been of too slow a growth, too gradual, and too much according to the regular stages of nature herself in its development, to have any chance of being other than well cemented; the

* Amongst these institutions, none appear to us so remarkable, or fitted to accomplish so prodigious a circle of purposes belonging to the highest state policy, as the Roman method of COLONISATION. Colonies were, in effect, the great engine of Roman conquest; and the following are among a few of the great ends to which they were applied:—First of all, how came it that the early armies of Rome served, and served cheerfully, without pay? Simply because all who were victorious knew that they would receive their arrears in the fullest and amplest form upon their final discharge, viz., in the shape of a colonial estate—large enough to rear a family in comfort, and seated in the midst of similar allotments distributed to their old comrades in arms. These lands were already, perhaps, in high cultivation, being often taken from conquered tribes; but, if not, the new occupants could rely for aid of every sort, for social intercourse, and for all the offices of good neighbourhood upon the surrounding proprietors, who were sure to be persons in the same circumstances as themselves, and draughted from the same legion. For be it remembered, that in the primitive ages of Rome, concerning which it is that we are now speaking, entire legions—privates and officers—were transferred in one body to the new colony. "Antiquitus," says the learned Goesius, "deducebantur integræ legiones, quibus patta victoria." Neither was there much waiting for this honorary gift. In later ages, it is true, when such resources were less plentiful, and when regular pay was given to the soldiery, it was the veteran only who obtained this splendid provision; but in the earlier times, a single fortunate campaign not seldom dismissed the young recruit to a life of ease and honour. "Multus legionibus," says Hyginus, "contigit bellum feliciter transigere, et ad laboriosam agriculturæ requiem *primo tyrocinii gradu* pervenire. Nam cum signis et aquila et primis ordinibus et tribunis deducebantur." Tacitus also notices this organization of the early colonies, and adds the reason of it, and its happy effect, when contrasting it with the vicious arrangements of the colonizing system in his own days. "Olim," says he, "universæ legiones deducebantur, cum tribunis et centurionibus, et sui cujusque ordinis

cohesion of its parts was intense; seven centuries of growth demand one or two at least for palpable decay; and it is only for harlequin empires like that of Napoleon, run up with the rapidity of pantomime, to fall asunder under the instant reaction of a few false moves in politics, or a single

militibis, *ut consensu et charitate rempublicam efficerent.*" *Secondly*, not only were the troops in this way paid at a time when the public purse was unequal to the expenditure of war, but this pay, being contingent on the successful issue of the war, added the strength of self-interest to that of patriotism in stimulating the soldier to extraordinary efforts. *Thirdly*, not only did the soldier in this way reap his pay, but also he reaped a reward (and that besides a trophy and perpetual monument of his public services), so munificent as to constitute a permanent provision for a family; and accordingly he was now encouraged, nay enjoined, to marry. For here was a hereditary landed estate equal to the liberal maintenance of a family. And thus did a simple people, obeying its instinct of conquest, not only discover, in its earliest days, the subtle principle of Machiavel—*Let war support war;* but (which is far more than Machiavel's view) they made each present war support many future wars, by making it support a new offset from the population, bound to the mother city by indissoluble ties of privilege and civic duties; and in many other ways they made every war, by and through the colonizing system to which it gave occasion, serviceable to future aggrandizement. War, managed in this way, and with these results, became to Rome what commerce or rural industry is to other countries, viz., the only hopeful and general way for making a fortune. *Fourthly*, by means of colonies it was that Rome delivered herself from her surplus population. Prosperous and well-governed, the Roman citizens of each generation outnumbered those of the generation preceding. But the colonies provided outlets for these continual accessions of people, and absorbed them faster than they could arise.* And thus the great original sin of modern states, that heel of Achilles in which they are all vulnerable, and which (generally speaking) becomes more oppressive to the public prosperity as that prosperity happens to be greater

* And in this way we must explain the fact that, in the many successive numerations of the people continually noticed by Livy and others, we do not find that sort of multiplication which we might have looked for in a state so ably governed. The truth is, that the continual surpluses had been carried off by the colonizing drain, before they could become noticeable or troublesome

disastrous campaign. Hence it was, and from the prudence of Augustus acting through a very long reign, sustained at no very distant interval by the personal inspection and revisions of Hadrian, that for some time the Roman power seemed to be stationary. What else could be expected?

(for in poor states and under despotic governments, this evil does not exist), that flagrant infirmity of our own country, for which no statesman has devised any commensurate remedy, was to ancient Rome a perpetual foundation and well-head of public strength and enlarged resources. With us of modern times, when population greatly outruns the demand for labour—whether it be under the stimulus of upright government, and just laws justly administered, in combination with the manufacturing system (as in England), or (as in Ireland) under the stimulus of idle habits, cheap subsistence, and a low standard of comfort—we think it much if we can keep down insurrection by the bayonet and the sabre. *Lucro ponamus* is our cry, if we can effect even thus much; whereas Rome, in her simplest and pastoral days, converted this menacing danger and standing opprobrium of modern statesmanship to her own immense benefit. Not satisfied merely to have neutralized it, she drew from it the vital resources of her martial aggrandizement. For, *Fifthly*, these colonies were in two ways made the corner-stones of her martial policy: 1st, They were looked to as nurseries of their armies; during one generation the original colonists, already trained to military habits, were themselves disposable for this purpose on any great emergency; these men transmitted heroic traditions to their posterity; and, at all events, a more robust population was always at hand in agricultural colonies than could be had in the metropolis. Cato the elder, and all the early writers, notice the quality of such levies as being far superior to those drawn from a population of sedentary habits. 2dly, The Italian colonies, one and all, performed the functions which in our day are assigned to garrisoned towns and frontier fortresses. In the earliest times they discharged a still more critical service, by sometimes entirely displacing a hostile population, and more often by dividing it and breaking its unity. In cases of desperate resistance to the Roman arms, marked by frequent infraction of treaties, it was usual to remove the offending population to a safer situation, separated from Rome by the Tiber; sometimes entirely to disperse and scatter it. But, where these extremities were not called for by expediency or the Roman maxims of

The mere strength of the impetus derived from the republican institutions could not but propagate itself, and cause even a motion in advance, for some time after those institutions had themselves begun to give way. And, besides, the military institutions survived all others; and the army

justice, it was judged sufficient to *interpolate*, as it were, the hostile people by colonizations from Rome, which were completely organized* for mutual aid, having officers of all ranks dispersed amongst them, and for overawing the growth of insurrectionary movements amongst their neighbours. Acting on this system, the Roman colonies in some measure resembled the *English Pale*, as existing at one era in Ireland. This mode of service, it is true, became obsolete in process of time, concurrently with the dangers which it was shaped to meet; for the whole of Italy proper, together with that part of Italy called Cisalpine Gaul, was at length reduced to unity and obedience by the almighty republic. But in forwarding that great end and indispensable condition towards all foreign warfare, no one military engine in the whole armory of Rome availed so much as her Italian colonies. The other use of these colonies, as frontier garrisons, or, at any rate, as interposing between a foreign enemy and the gates of Rome, they continued to perform long after their earlier uses had passed away; and Cicero himself notices their value in this view. "Colonias," says he, [*Orat in Rullum*], "sic idoneis in locis contra suspicionem periculi collocarunt, ut esse non oppida Italiæ sed *propugnacula* imperii viderentur." *Finally*, the colonies were the best means of promoting tillage, and the culture of vineyards. And though this service, as regarded the Italian colonies, was greatly defeated in succeeding times by the ruinous largesses of corn [*frumentationes*], and other vices of the Roman policy after the vast revolution effected by universal luxury, it is not the less true that, left to themselves and their natural tendency, the Roman colonies would have yielded this last benefit as certainly as any other. Large volumes exist, illustrated by the learning of Rigaltius, Salmasius, and Goesius, upon the mere technical arrangements of the Roman colonies; and whole libraries might be written on these same colonies, considered as engines of exquisite state policy.

* That is indeed involved in the technical term of *deductio*; for unless the ceremonies, religious and political, of inauguration and organization, were duly complied with, the colony was not entitled to be considered as *deducta*—that is, solemnly and ceremonially transplanted from the metropolis.

continued very much the same in its discipline and composition, long after Rome and all its civic institutions had bent before an utter revolution. It was very possible even that emperors should have arisen with martial propensities, and talents capable of masking, for many years, by specious but transitory conquests, the causes that were silently sapping the foundations of Roman supremacy; and thus by accidents of personal character and taste, an empire might even have expanded itself in appearance, which, by all its permanent and real tendencies, was even then shrinking within narrower limits, and travelling downwards to dissolution. In reality, one such emperor there was. Trajan, whether by martial inclinations, or (as some suppose) by dissatisfaction with his own position at Rome, when brought into more immediate connexion with the Senate, was driven into needless war; and he achieved conquests in the direction of Dacia as well as Parthia. But that these conquests were not substantial,—that they were connected by no true cement of cohesion with the existing empire, is evident from the rapidity with which the Roman grasp was relaxed, and the provinces recoiled into the hands of their old masters. In the next reign, the empire had already rolled back within its former limits; and in two reigns further on, under Marcus Antoninus, though a prince of elevated character and warlike in his policy, we find such concessions of territory made to the Marcomanni and others, as indicate too plainly the shrinking energies of a waning empire. In reality, if we consider the polar opposition, in point of interest and situation, between the great officers of the republic and the Augustus or Cæsar of the empire, we cannot fail to see the immense effect which that difference must have had upon the permanent spirit of conquest. The Cæsar was either adopted or elected to a situation of infinite luxury

and enjoyment. He had no interests to secure by fighting in person: and he had a powerful interest in preventing others from fighting; since in that way only he could raise up competitors to himself, and dangerous seducers of the army. A consul, on the other hand, or great lieutenant of the senate, had nothing to enjoy or to hope for, when his term of office should have expired, unless according to his success in creating military fame and influence for himself. Those Cæsars who fought whilst the empire was or seemed to be stationary, as Trajan, did so from personal taste. Those who fought in after centuries, when the decay became apparent, and dangers drew nearer, as Aurelian, did so from the necessities of fear; and under neither impulse were they likely to make durable conquests. The spirit of conquest having therefore departed at the very time when conquest would have become more difficult even to the republican energies, both from remoteness of ground and from the martial character of the chief nations which stood beyond the frontier, it was a matter of necessity that with the republican institutions should expire the whole principle of territorial aggrandizement; and that, if the empire seemed to be stationary for some time after its establishment by Julius, and its final settlement by Augustus, this was through no strength of its own, or inherent in its own constitution, but through the continued action of that strength which it had inherited from the republic. In a philosophical sense, therefore, it may be affirmed, that the empire of the Cæsars was *always* in decline; ceasing to go forward, it could not do other than retrograde; and even the first *appearances* of decline can, with no propriety, be referred to the reign of Commodus. His vices exposed him to public contempt and assassination; but neither one nor the other had any effect upon the strength of the empire. Here,

therefore, is one just subject of complaint against Gibbon, that he has dated the declension of the Roman power from a commencement arbitrarily assumed ; another, and a heavier, is, that he has failed to notice the steps and separate indications of decline as they arose—the moments (to speak in the language of dynamics) through which the decline travelled onwards to its consummation. It is also a grievous offence as regards the true purposes of history—and one which, in a complete exposition of the imperial history, all readers would have a right to denounce—that Gibbon brings forward only such facts as allow of a scenical treatment, and seems everywhere, by the glancing style of his allusions, to presuppose an acquaintance the most familiar with that very history which he undertakes to deliver. Our immediate purpose, however, is simply to characterize the office of emperor, and to notice such events and changes as operated for evil, and for a final effect of decay, upon the Cæsars or upon their empire. As the best means of realizing this purpose, we shall rapidly review the history of both, premising that we confine ourselves to the true Cæsars, and the true empire, of the West.

The first overt act of weakness—the first expression of conscious declension, as regarded the foreign enemies of Rome—occurred in the reign of Hadrian ; for it is a very different thing to forbear making conquests, and to renounce them when made. It is possible, however, that the cession then made of Mesopotamia and Armenia, however sure to be interpreted into the language of fear by the enemy, did not imply any such principle in this emperor. He was of a civic and paternal spirit, and anxious for the substantial welfare of the empire rather than its ostentatious glory. But such a distinction in practice depends for its prudence altogether on the quality of your antagonist ; with a wretched

Asiatic enemy to lose an atom of lustre is—to lose the substance of victory. The internal administration of affairs had very much gone into neglect since the times of Augustus; and Hadrian supposed that he could effect more public good by an extensive progress through the empire, and by a personal correction of abuses, than by any military enterprise. It is, besides, asserted that he received an indemnity in money for the provinces beyond the Euphrates. But still it remains true, that in his reign the God Terminus made his first retrograde motion; and this emperor became naturally an object of public obloquy at Rome, and his name fell under the superstitious ban of a fatal tradition connected with the foundation of the capitol. The two Antonines, Titus and Marcus, who came next in succession, were truly good and patriotic princes; perhaps the only princes in the whole series who combined the virtues of private and of public life. In their reigns the frontier line was maintained in its integrity, and at the expense of some severe fighting under Marcus, who was a strenuous general at the same time that he was a severe student. It is, however, true, as we observed above, that, by allowing a settlement within the Roman frontier to a barbarous people, Marcus Aurelius raised the first ominous precedent in favour of those Gothic, Vandal, and Frankish hives, who were as yet hidden behind a cloud of years. Homes had been obtained by Trans-Danubian barbarians upon the Cis-Danubian territory of Rome: that fact remained upon tradition: whilst the terms upon which they had been obtained, how much or how little connected with fear, necessarily became liable to doubt and to oblivion. Here we pause to remark, that the first twelve Cæsars, together with Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines, making seventeen emperors, compose the first of four nearly equal groups, who

occupied the throne in succession until the extinction of the Western Empire. And at this point be it observed—that is, at the termination of the first group—we take leave of all genuine virtue. In no one of the succeeding princes, if we except Alexander Severus, do we meet with any goodness of heart, or even amiableness of manners. The best in a public sense, of the future emperors, were harsh and repulsive in private character.

The second group, as we have classed them, terminating with Philip the Arab, commences with Commodus. This unworthy prince, although the son of the excellent Marcus Antoninus, turned out a monster of debauchery. At the moment of his father's death, he was present in person at the head-quarters of the army on the Danube, and of necessity partook in many of their hardships. This it was which furnished his evil counsellors with their sole argument for urging his departure to the capital. A council having been convened, the faction of court sycophants pressed upon his attention the inclemency of the climate, contrasting it with the genial skies and sunny fields of Italy; and the season, which happened to be winter, gave strength to their representations. What! would the emperor be content for ever to hew out the frozen water with an axe before he could assuage his thirst? And, again, the total want of fruit-trees—did that recommend their present station as a fit one for the imperial court? Commodus, ashamed to found his objections to the station upon grounds so unsoldierly as these, affected to be moved by political reasons: some great senatorial house might take advantage of his distance from home, might seize the palace, fortify it, and raise levies in Italy capable of sustaining its pretensions to the throne. These arguments were combated by Pompeianus, who, besides his personal weight as an officer, had married the

eldest sister of the young emperor. Shame prevailed for the present with Commodus, and he dismissed the council with an assurance that he would think farther of it. The sequel was easy to foresee. Orders were soon issued for the departure of the court to Rome; and the task of managing the barbarians of Dacia, was delegated to lieutenants. The system upon which these officers executed their commission was a mixed one of terror and persuasion. Some they defeated in battle; and these were the majority; for Herodian says, πλείστους τῶν βαρβαρῶν ὅπλοις ἐχειρώσαντο :* others they bribed into peace by large sums of money. And no doubt this last article in the policy of Commodus was that which led Gibbon to assign to *his* reign the first rudiments of the Roman declension. But it should be remembered, that, virtually, this policy was but the further prosecution of that which had already been adopted by Marcus Aurelius. Concessions and temperaments of any sort or degree showed that the Pannonian frontier was in too formidable a condition to be treated with uncompromising rigour. Τὸ ἀμέριμνον ὠνούμενος, purchasing an immunity from all further anxiety, Commodus (as the historian expresses it) πάντα ἐδίδου τὰ αἰτούμενα —conceded all demands whatever.. His journey to Rome was one continued festival: and the whole population of Rome turned out to welcome him. At this period he was undoubtedly the darling of the people: his personal beauty was splendid; and he was connected by blood with some of the greatest nobility. Over this flattering scene of hope and triumph clouds soon gathered: with the mob, indeed, there is reason to think that he continued a favourite to the last; but the respectable part of the citizens were

* *i.e.*, Most of the barbarians they subdued by arms.

speedily disgusted with his self-degradation, and came to hate him even more than ever or by any class he had been loved. The Roman pride never shows itself more conspicuously throughout all history, than in the alienation of heart which inevitably followed any great and continued outrages upon his own majesty, committed by their emperor. Cruelties the most atrocious, acts of vengeance the most bloody, fratricide, parricide, all were viewed with more toleration than oblivion of his own inviolable sanctity. Hence we imagine the wrath with which Rome would behold Commodus, under the eyes of four hundred thousand spectators, making himself a party to the contests of gladiators. In his earlier exhibitions as an archer, it is possible that his matchless dexterity, and his unerring eye, would avail to mitigate the censures: but when the Roman Imperator actually descended to the arena in the garb and equipments of a servile prize-fighter, and personally engaged in combat with such antagonists, having previously submitted to their training and discipline—the public indignation rose to a height which spoke aloud the language of encouragement to conspiracy and treason. These were not wanting: three memorable plots against his life were defeated; one of them (that of Maternus, the robber) accompanied with romantic circumstances,* which we have narrated in an earlier paper of this series. Another was set on foot by his eldest sister, Lucilla; nor did her close relationship protect her from capital punishment. In that instance, the immediate agent of her purposes, Quintianus,

* On this occasion we may notice that the final execution of the vengeance projected by Maternus, was reserved for a public festival, exactly corresponding to the modern *carnival;* and from an expression used by Herodian, it is plain that *masquerading,* under gay and dramatic disguises, had been an ancient practice in Rome.

a young man, of signal resolution and daring, who had attempted to stab the emperor at the entrance of the amphitheatre, though baffled in his purpose, uttered a word which rang continually in the ears of Commodus, and poisoned his peace of mind for ever. His vengeance, perhaps, was thus more effectually accomplished than if he had at once dismissed his victim from life. "The senate," Quintianus had said, "sends thee this through me:" and henceforward the senate was the object of unslumbering suspicions to the emperor. Yet the public suspicions settled upon a different quarter; and a very memorable scene must have pointed his own in the same direction, supposing that he had previously been blind to his danger.

On a day of great solemnity, when Rome had assembled her myriads in the amphitheatre, just at the very moment when the nobles, the magistrates, the priests, all, in short, that was venerable or consecrated in the State, with the Imperator in their centre, had taken their seats, and were waiting for the opening of the shows, a stranger, in the robe of a philosopher, bearing a staff in his hand (which also was the professional ensign of a philosopher*), stepped forward, and, by the waving of his hand, challenged the attention of Commodus. Deep silence ensued: upon which, in a few words, ominous to the ear as the handwriting on the wall to the eye of Belshazzar, the stranger unfolded to Commodus the instant peril which menaced both his life and his throne, from his great servant Perennius. What personal purpose of benefit to himself this stranger might have connected with his public warning, or by whom he might have been suborned, was never discovered; for he was instantly arrested by the agents of the great officer

* See Casaubon's notes upon Theophrastus.

whom he had denounced, dragged away to punishment, and put to a cruel death. Commodus dissembled his panic for the present: but soon after, having received undeniable proofs (as is alleged) of the treason imputed to Perennius, in the shape of a coin which had been struck by his son, he caused the father to be assassinated; and, on the same day, by means of forged letters, before this news could reach the son, who commanded the Illyrian armies, he lured *him* also to destruction, under the belief that he was obeying the summons of his father to a private interview on the Italian frontier. So perished those enemies, if enemies they really were. But to these tragedies succeeded others far more comprehensive in their mischief, and in more continuous succession than is recorded upon any other page of universal history. Rome was ravaged by a pestilence—by a famine—by riots amounting to a civil war—by a dreadful massacre of the unarmed mob—by shocks of earthquake—and, finally, by a fire which consumed the national bank,* and the most sumptuous buildings of the city. To these horrors, with a rapidity characteristic of the Roman depravity, and possible only under the most extensive demoralization of the public mind, succeeded festivals of gorgeous pomp, and amphitheatrical exhibitions, upon a scale of grandeur absolutely unparalleled by all former attempts. Then were beheld, and familiarized to the eyes of the Roman mob, to children, and to women, animals as yet known to us, says Herodian, only in pictures. Whatever strange or rare animal could be drawn from the depths of India, from Siam, and Pegu, or from the unvisited nooks

* Viz, the Temple of Peace; at that time the most magnificent edifice in Rome. Temples, it is well known, were the places used in ancient times as banks of deposit. For this function they were admirably fitted by their inviolable sanctity.

of Ethiopia, were now brought together as subjects for the archery of the universal lord.* Invitations (and the invitations of kings are commands) had been scattered on this occasion profusely ; not, as heretofore, to individuals or to families, but, as was in proportion to the occasion where an emperor was the chief performer, to nations. People were summoned by circles of longitude and latitude to come and see—things that eye had not seen, nor ear heard of—the specious miracles of nature brought together from arctic and from tropic deserts, putting forth their strength, their speed, or their beauty, and glorifying by their deaths the matchless hand of the Roman king. *There* was beheld the lion from Bilidulgerid, and the leopard from Hindustan—the rein-deer from polar latitudes—the antelope from the Zaara—and the leigh, or gigantic stag, from Britain. Thither came the buffalo and the bison, the white bull of Northumberland and Galloway, the unicorn from the regions of Nepaul or Thibet, the rhinoceros and the river-horse from Senegal, with the elephant of Ceylon or Siam. The ostrich and the cameleopard, the wild ass and the zebra, the chamois from Alpine peaks of ice, the wild goat from

* What a prodigious opportunity for the zoologist! And considering that these shows prevailed for 500 years, during all which period the amphitheatre gave bounties, as it were, to the hunter and the fowler of every climate, and that, by means of a stimulus so constantly applied, scarcely any animal, the shyest, rarest, fiercest, escaped the demands of the arena,—no one fact so much illustrates the inertia of the public mind in those days, and the indifference to all scientific pursuits, as that no annotator should have risen to Pliny the elder *—no rival to the immortal tutor of Alexander.

* Whose great work is the earliest prophetic sketch descending from classic times, of an *encyclopædia*. Yet had not Greece, three centuries and more before Pliny, shown us sketches the most magnificent of such an encyclopædia, in the various essays of Aristotle? Certainly. But the result is unsatisfactory, and doubly so. Known works of Aristotle are wanting; and inversely, others which offer themselves as *his*, are either spurious beyond all question, or, upon internal evidence, are doubtful

Crete, and the ibex from the eternal sunshine of Angora,—all brought their tributes of beauty or deformity to these vast aceldamas of Rome: their savage voices ascended in tumultuous uproar to the chambers of the capitol: a million of spectators sat round them: standing in the centre was a single statuesque figure—the imperial sagittary, beautiful as an Antinous, and majestic as a Jupiter, whose hand was so steady and whose eye so true, that he was never known to miss, and who, in this accomplishment at least, was so absolute in his excellence, that as we are assured by a writer not disposed to flatter him, the very foremost of the Parthian archers and of the Mauritanian lancers [Παρθυαίων οἱ τοξικὴν ἀκριβοῦντες, καὶ Μαυρουσίων οἱ ἀκοντίζειν ἄριστοι] were not able to contend with him. Juvenal, in a well-known passage upon the disproportionate endings of illustrious careers, drawing one of his examples from Marius, says that he ought, for his own glory, and to make his end correspondent to his life, to have died at the moment when he descended from his triumphal chariot at the portals of the capitol. And of Commodus, in like manner, it may be affirmed that, had he died in the exercise of his peculiar art, with a hecatomb of victims rendering homage to his miraculous skill, by the regularity of the files which they presented, as they lay stretched out dying or dead upon the arena,—he would have left a splendid and a characteristic impression of himself upon that nation of spectators who had witnessed his performance. He was the noblest artist in his own profession that the world had ever seen—in archery he was the Robin Hood of Rome; he was in the very meridian of his youth; and he was the most beautiful man of his own times [τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀνθρώπων κάλλει εὐπρεπέστατος.] He would therefore have looked the part admirably of the dying gladiator; and he would have died

in his natural vocation. But it was ordered otherwise; his death was destined to private malice, and to an ignoble hand. And much obscurity still rests upon the motives of the assassins, though its circumstances are reported possibly with truth and certainly with unusual minuteness of detail. One thing is evident, that the public and patriotic motives assigned by the perpetrators as the remote grounds of their conspiracy, cannot have been the true ones.

The grave historian may sum up his character of Commodus by saying that, however richly endowed with natural gifts, he abused them all to bad purposes; that he derogated from his noble ancestors, and disavowed the obligations of his illustrious name; and, as the climax of his offences, that he dishonoured the purple—*αἰσχροῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν*—by the baseness of his pursuits. All that is true, and more than that. But these considerations were not of a nature to affect his parasitical attendants very nearly or keenly. Yet the story runs—that Marcia, his privileged mistress, deeply affected by the anticipation of some further outrages upon his high dignity which he was then meditating, had carried the importunity of her deprecations too far; that the irritated emperor had consequently inscribed her name, in company with others (whom he had reason to tax with the same offence, or whom he suspected of similar sentiments), in his little black book, or pocket souvenir of death; that this book, being left under the cushion of a sofa, had been conveyed into the hands of Marcia by a little pet boy, called Philo-Commodus, who was caressed equally by the emperor and by Marcia; that she had immediately called to her aid, and to the participation of her plot, those who participated in her danger; and that the proximity of their own intended fate had prescribed to them an immediate attempt; the circumstances of which were

these. At mid-day the emperor was accustomed to bathe, and at the same time to take refreshments. On this occasion, Marcia, agreeably to her custom, presented him with a goblet of wine, medicated with poison. Of this wine, having just returned from the fatigues of the chase, Commodus drank freely, and almost immediately fell into heavy slumbers; from which, however, he was soon aroused by deadly sickness. That was a case which the conspirators had not taken into their calculations; and they now began to fear that the violent vomiting which succeeded might throw off the poison. There was no time to be lost; and the barbarous Marcia, who had so often slept in the arms of the young emperor, was the person to propose that he should now be strangled. A young gladiator named Narcissus was therefore introduced into the room; what passed is not known circumstantially; but, as the emperor was young and athletic, though off his guard at the moment, and under the disadvantage of sickness, and as he had himself been regularly trained in the gladiatorial discipline, there can be little doubt that the vile assassin would meet with a desperate resistance. And thus, after all, there is good reason to think that the emperor resigned his life in the character of a dying gladiator.*

* It is worthy of notice, that, under any suspension of the imperatorial power or office, the senate was the body to whom the Roman mind even yet continued to turn. In this case, both to colour their crime with a show of public motives, and to interest this great body in their own favour by associating them in their own dangers, the conspirators pretended to have found a long roll of senatorial names included in the same page of condemnation with their own. Shallow fabrication! The story of the little black memorandum book is childish. Courtezans are not anxious for the maintenance of public dignity; and princes, who are meditating vindictive murders, do not need any written mementos of their angry purposes.

So perished the eldest and sole surviving son of the great Marcus Aurelius Antoninus; and the throne passed into the momentary possession of two old men, who reigned in succession each for a few weeks. The first of these was Pertinax, an upright man, a good officer, and an unseasonable reformer; unseasonable for those times, and, therefore, more so for himself. Lætus, the ringleader in the assassination of Commodus, had been at that time the prætorian prefect, an office which a German writer considers as best represented to modern ideas by the Turkish post of grand vizier. Needing a protector at this moment, he naturally fixed his eyes upon Pertinax, as then holding the powerful command of city prefect (or governor of Rome). Him therefore he recommended to the soldiery, that is, to the prætorian cohorts. The soldiery had no particular objection to the old general, if he and they could agree upon terms; his age being doubtless appreciated as a first-rate recommendation, in a case where it insured a speedy renewal of the lucrative bargain: the bargain was good in proportion as it promised a speedy repetition.

The only demur arose with Pertinax himself: he had been leader of the troops in Britain, subsequently superintendent of the police in Rome, thirdly proconsul in Africa, and finally consul and governor of Rome. In these great official stations he stood so near to the throne as to observe the dangers with which it was surrounded; and it is asserted that he declined the offered dignity. But it is added, that, finding the choice allowed him lay between immediate death* and acceptance, he closed with the proposals of the

* Historians have failed to remark the contradiction between this statement and the allegation that Lætus selected Pertinax for the throne on a consideration of his ability to protect the assassins of Commodus.

prætorian cohorts, at the rate of about ninety-six pounds per man; which largess he paid by bringing to sale the rich furniture of the last emperor. The danger which usually threatened a Roman Cæsar in such cases was lest he should not be able to fulfil his contract. But in the case of Pertinax the danger began from the moment when he *had* fulfilled it. As a debtor he was safe; but when the bill against him had been *receipted*, he became ripe for death. Conceiving himself to be now released from his dependency, on the reasonable assumption that his official authority was at length settled upon a sure foundation, when the last arrears of the purchase money had been paid down, he commenced his reforms, civil as well as military, with a zeal which alarmed all those who had an interest in maintaining old abuses. To two great factions he thus made himself especially obnoxious; to the prætorian cohorts, and to the courtiers under the last reign. The connecting link between these two parties was Lætus, who belonged personally to the last, but still retained his influence with the first. Possibly his fears were alarmed; but, at all events, his cupidity was dissatisfied. He conceived himself to have been ill rewarded; and immediately resorting to the same weapons which he had used against Commodus, he stimulated the prætorian guards to murder the emperor. Three hundred of them pressed into the palace: Pertinax attempted to harangue them, and to vindicate himself; but not being able to obtain a hearing, he folded his robe about his head, called upon Jove the Avenger, and was immediately despatched.

The throne was again empty after a reign of about eighty days; and now came the memorable scandal of putting up the empire to auction. There were two bidders, Sulpicianus and Didius Julianus. The first, however, at that time

governor of Rome, lay under a weight of suspicion, being the father-in-law of Pertinax, and likely enough to exact vengeance for his murder. He was besides outbid by Julianus. Sulpician offered about one hundred and sixty pounds a man to the guards; his rival offered two hundred, and assured them besides of immediate payment; "For," said he, "I have the money at home, without needing to raise it from the possessions of the crown." Upon this the empire was knocked down to Didius as the highest bidder. So shocking, however, was this transaction to the Roman pride, that the guards durst not leave their own creation without military protection. The resentment of an unarmed mob, however, soon ceased to be of foremost importance; for this resentment extended rapidly to all the frontiers of the empire, where the armies felt that the prætorian cohorts had no exclusive title to give away the throne; and their leaders felt, that, in a contest of this nature, their own claims were incomparably superior to those of the present occupant. Three great candidates therefore started forward: Septimius Severus, who commanded the armies in Illyria, Pescennius Niger in Syria, and Albinus in Britain. Severus, as the nearest to Rome, marched and possessed himself of that city. Vengeance followed upon all the accomplices in the late murder. Julianus, unable to complete his bargain, had already been put to death, as a deprecatory offering to the approaching army. Severus himself inflicted death upon Lætus, and dismissed the prætorian cohorts. Thence marching against his Syrian rival, Niger, who had formerly been his friend, and who was not wanting in military skill, he overthrew him in three great battles. Niger fled to Antioch, the seat of his late government, and was there decapitated. Meantime Albinus, the British commander-in-chief, had already been won over by the title of Cæsar, or adopted heir

to the new Augustus. But the hollowness of this bribe soon became apparent; and the two competitors met to decide their pretensions at Lyons. In the great battle which followed, Severus fell from his horse, and was at first supposed to be dead. But recovering, he defeated his rival, who immediately committed suicide. Severus displayed his ferocious temper sufficiently by sending the head of Albinus to Rome. Other expressions of his natural character soon followed: he suspected strongly that Albinus had been favoured by the senate; forty of that body, with their wives and children, were immediately sacrificed to his wrath; is this credible? but he never forgave the rest, nor endured to live upon terms of amity amongst them. Quitting Rome in disgust, he employed himself first in making war upon the Parthians, who had naturally, from situation, befriended his Syrian rival. Their capital cities he overthrew; and afterwards, by way of employing his armies, made war in Britain. At the city of York he died; and to his two sons, Geta and Caracalla, he bequeathed, as his dying advice, a maxim of policy, which sufficiently indicates the situation of the empire at that period; it was this—"To enrich the soldiery at any price, and to regard the rest of their subjects as so many ciphers." But, as a critical historian remarks, this was a short-sighted and self-destroying policy; since in no way is the subsistence of the soldier made more insecure, than by diminishing the general security of rights and property to those who are not soldiers, from whom, after all, the funds must be sought, upon which the soldier himself must draw for pay and for supplies. The two sons of Severus, whose bitter enmity is so memorably put on record by their actions, travelled simultaneously from York to Rome; but so mistrustful of each other, that at every stage the rancorous brothers took up their quarters at different houses. Geta has obtained

the sympathy of historians, because he happened to be the victim; but there is reason to think, that each of the princes was laying murderous snares for the other. The weak credulity, rather than the conscious innocence, of Geta, led to the catastrophe; he presented himself at a preconcerted meeting with his brother in the presence of their common mother, and was murdered by Caracalla in his mother's arms. He was, however, avenged; the horrors of that tragedy, and remorse for the twenty thousand murders which had followed, never forsook the guilty Caracalla. Quitting Rome, but pursued into every region by the bloody image of his brother, the emperor henceforward led a wandering life at the head of his legions; but never was there a better illustration of the poet's maxim that

"Remorse is as the mind in which it grows:"

gloomy, in short, and fretful in a nature of ferocious instincts, but softening into gentle penitential issues only under gracious affections of love and pity and self-renunciation. Certainly Caracalla's remorse put on no shape of repentance. On the contrary, he carried anger and oppression wherever he moved; and protected himself from plots only by living in the very centre of a nomadic camp. Six years had passed away in this manner, when a mere accident led to his assassination. For the sake of security, the office of prætorian prefect had been divided between two commissioners; one for military affairs, the other for civil. The latter of these two officers was Opilius Macrinus. This man has, by some historians, been supposed to have harboured no bad intentions; but, unfortunately, an astrologer had foretold that he was destined to the throne. The prophet was laid in irons at Rome, and letters were despatched to Caracalla, apprising him of the case. These letters, as yet unopened, were trans-

ferred by the emperor, then occupied in witnessing a race, to Macrinus, who thus became acquainted with the whole grounds of suspicion against himself,—grounds which, to the jealousy of the emperor, he well knew would appear substantial proofs. Upon this he resolved to anticipate the emperor in the work of murder. The head-quarters were then at Edessa; and upon his instigation, a disappointed centurion, named Martialis, animated also by revenge for the death of his brother, undertook to assassinate Caracalla. An opportunity soon offered, on a visit which the prince made to the celebrated temple of the moon at Carrhæ. The attempt was successful: the emperor perished; but Martialis paid the penalty of his crime in the same hour, being shot by a Scythian archer of the body-guard.

Macrinus, after three days' interregnum, being elected emperor, began his reign by purchasing a peace from the Parthians. What the empire chiefly needed at this moment, is evident from the next step taken by the new emperor. He laboured to restore the ancient discipline of the armies in all its rigour. He was aware of the risk he ran in this attempt; and that he *was* so, is the best evidence of the strong necessity which existed for reform. Perhaps, however, he might have surmounted his difficulties and dangers, had he met with no competitor round whose person the military malcontents could rally. But such a competitor soon arose; and, to the astonishment of all the world, in the person of a Syrian. The Emperor Severus, on losing his first wife, had resolved to strengthen the pretensions of his family by a second marriage with some lady having a regal "genesis," that is, whose horoscope promised a regal destiny. Julia Domna, a native of Syria, offered him this dowry, and she became the mother of Geta. A sister of this Julia, called Mœsa, had, through two different daugh-

ters, two grandsons—Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus. The mutineers of the army rallied round the first of these; a battle was fought; and Macrinus, with his son Diadumenianus, whom he had adopted to the succession, were captured and put to death. Heliogabalus succeeded, and reigned in the monstrous manner which has rendered his name infamous in history. In what way, however, he lost the affections of the army, has never been explained.* His mother, Socemias, the eldest daughter of Mœsa, had represented herself as the concubine of Caracalla; and Heliogabalus, being thus accredited as the son of that emperor, whose memory was dear to the soldiery, had enjoyed the full benefit of that descent, nor can it be readily explained how he came to lose it.

Here, in fact, we meet with an eminent instance of that dilemma which is so constantly recurring in the history of the Cæsars. If a prince is by temperament disposed to severity of manners, and naturally seeks to impress his own spirit upon the composition and discipline of the army, we are sure to find that he was cut off in his attempts by private assassination or by public rebellion. On the other hand, if he wallows in sensuality, and is careless about all discipline, civil or military, we then find as certainly that he loses the esteem and affections of the army to some rival of severer habits. That very defect of sternness, viz., defect of a quality which would assuredly have entailed a murderous fate, is pleaded as a reciprocating or alternate ground of violent death by these brawling scoundrels, who know not even their own minds for six days in succession. And in the midst of such oscillations, and with examples of such

* Elsewhere we have explained that Heliogabalus was simply a foolish boy, perhaps a lunatic, and left too early without natural guardians.

contradictory interpretation, we cannot wonder that the Roman princes did not oftener take warning by the misfortunes of their predecessors. In the present instance, Alexander, the cousin of Heliogabalus, without intrigues of his own, and simply (as it appears) by the purity and sobriety of his conduct, had alienated the affections of the army from the reigning prince. Either jealousy or prudence had led Heliogabalus to make an attempt upon his rival's life; and this attempt had nearly cost him his own through the mutiny which it caused. In a second uproar, produced by some fresh intrigues of the emperor against his cousin, the soldiers became unmanageable, they were maddened by reports, true or false, and they refused to pause until they had massacred Heliogabalus, together with his mother, and had raised his cousin Alexander to the throne.

The reforms of this prince, who reigned under the name of Alexander Severus, were extensive and searching; not only in his court, which he purged of all notorious abuses, but throughout the whole machinery and framework of the army. He cashiered, upon one occasion, an entire legion: and the legion of Rome, it must be remembered, though fluctuating (as might be expected) through a course of one thousand years, never amounted to less than five modern battalions of the last 150 years, *i. e.*, five times 600 men. Three thousand men you may count on at the least. But at some periods, the legion numbered as much as five, or even six thousand men. And, in fact, with its complementary wings of auxiliar cavalry was virtually what in France (and since the Crimean war at home) is called a *Division*. He restored, as far as he was able, the ancient discipline; and, above all, he liberated the provinces from military spoliation. "Let the soldier," said he, "be contented with his

pay; and whatever more he wants, let him obtain it by victory from the enemy, not by pillage from his fellow-subject." But whatever might be the value or extent of his reforms in the marching regiments, Alexander could not succeed in bending the prætorian guards to his yoke. Under the guardianship of his mother Mammæa, the conduct of state affairs had been submitted to a council of sixteen persons, at the head of which stood the celebrated lawyer Ulpian. To this minister the prætorians imputed the reforms, and perhaps the whole principle and inspiration which breathed throughout the actual reforms; for they pursued him with a vengeance which is else hardly to be explained. Many days was Ulpian protected by the citizens of Rome, until the whole city was threatened with conflagration; he then fled to the palace of the young emperor, who in vain attempted to save him from his pursuers under the shelter of the imperial purple. Ulpian was murdered before his eyes; nor was it found possible to punish the ringleader in this foul conspiracy, until he had been removed by something like treachery to a remote government. So dreadful is the empire of triumphant wrong: outrage breeds outrage; treachery necessitates treachery; and crimes, or criminals, that tower up to licentious heights, disowning all responsibility, are reached by secret acts of vengeance that destroy all sense of honour. Even extra legal powers, such as the Roman dictatorship, or our own suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*, or proclamation of martial law (where instant execution follows the most hurried of trials) are viewed with grief and jealousy by those even that resort to such fearful instruments of public wrath. But in cases like those so often arising in imperial Rome, where an insolent soldiery intercepted all action of law, regular or irregular, and in a manner forced the rulers into

secret or circuitous acts of retribution that too much wore an air vindictive or even perfidious—the tendency lay not towards ultra-legal but absolutely towards anti-social results; not towards extremities of rigour wounding to all human sensibilities, but towards mere anarchy that uprooted the basis of all social security.

Meantime, a great revolution and change of dynasty had been effected in Parthia; the line of the Arsacidæ was terminated; the Parthian empire was at an end; and the sceptre of Persia was restored under the new race of the Sassanides Artaxerxes, the first prince of this resurgent race, sent an embassy of four hundred select knights, enjoining the Roman emperor to content himself with Europe, and to leave Asia to the Persians. In the event of a refusal, the ambassadors were instructed to offer a defiance to the Roman prince. Upon such an insult, Alexander could not do less, with either safety or dignity, than prepare for war. It is probable, indeed, that, by this expedition, which drew off the minds of the soldiery from brooding upon the reforms which offended them, the life of Alexander was prolonged. But the expedition itself was mismanaged, or, from some cause, was unfortunate. This result, however, does not seem chargeable upon Alexander. All the preparations were admirable on the march, and up to the enemy's frontier. The invasion it was, which, in a strategic sense, seems to have been ill combined. Three armies were to have entered Persia simultaneously: one of these, which was destined to act on a flank of the general line, entangled itself in the marshy grounds near Babylon, and was cut off by the archery of an enemy whom it could not reach. The other wing, acting upon ground impracticable for the manœuvres of the Persian cavalry, and supported by Chosroes the king of Armenia, gave great trouble to Arta-

xerxes, and with adequate support from the other armies, would doubtless have been victorious. But the central army, under the conduct of Alexander in person, discouraged by the destruction of one entire wing, remained stationary in Mesopotamia throughout the summer, and, at the close of the campaign, was withdrawn to Antioch, *re infectâ.* It has been observed that great mystery hangs over the operations and issue of this short war. We, however, would beg to ask what Roman campaign, in any quarter beyond the Euphrates, was other than mysterious in its means or ends, its manœuvres or its results, from the days of Crassus and of Antony to those of Julian or Valerian? Thus much, however, is evident, that nothing but the previous exhaustion of the Persian king saved the Roman armies from signal discomfiture; and even thus there is no ground for claiming a victory (as most historians do) to the Roman arms. Any termination of the Persian war, however, advantageous or not, was likely to be personally injurious to Alexander, by allowing leisure to the soldiery for recurring to their grievances. Sensible, no doubt, of this, Alexander was gratified by the occasion which then arose for repressing the hostile movements of the Germans. He led his army off upon this expedition; but their temper was gloomy and threatening; and at length, after reaching the seat of war, at Mentz, an open mutiny broke out under the guidance of Maximin, which terminated in the murder of the emperor and his mother. By Herodian the discontents of the army are referred to the ill management of the Persian campaign, and the unpromising commencement of the new war in Germany. But it seems probable that a dissolute and wicked army, like that of Alexander, had not murmured under the too little, but the too much of military service; not the buying a truce with gold was so likely to

have offended them, as the having led them at all upon an enterprise of danger and hardship.

To the high-principled Alexander, the first of the Cæsars that expressed a nascent disposition to favour Christianity (a disposition, by the way, which may secretly have precipitated his destruction), succeeded the brutal Maximin, originally a big-boned peasant, whose feats of strength, when he first courted the notice of the Emperor Severus, have been described by Gibbon. He was at that period a Thracian rustic; since then he had risen gradually to high offices; but, according to historians, he retained his Thracian brutality to the last. That may have been true; but one remark must be made upon this occasion; Maximin was especially opposed to the senate; and wherever that was the case, no justice was done to an emperor. Why it was that Maximin would not ask for the confirmation of his election from the senate has never been explained; it is said that he anticipated a rejection. But, on the other hand, it seems probable that the senate supposed its sanction to be despised. Nothing, apparently, but this reciprocal reserve in making approaches to each other, was the cause of all the bloodshed which followed. The two Gordians who commanded in Africa were set up by the senate against the new emperor; and the consternation of that body must have been great when these champions were immediately overthrown and killed. They did not, however, despair: substituting the two governors of Rome, Pupienus and Balbinus, and associating to them the younger Gordian, they resolved to make a stand; for the severities of Maximin had by this time manifested that it was a contest of extermination—a duel of life and death. Meantime, Maximin had broken up from Sirmium, the capital of Pannonia, and had advanced to Aquileia,—that famous fortress

on the Adriatic, which in every invasion of Italy was the first object of attack. The senate had set a price upon his head; but there was every probability that he would have triumphed had he not disgusted his army by immoderate severities. It was, however, but reasonable that those who would not support the strict though equitable discipline of the mild Alexander, should suffer under the barbarous and capricious rigour of Maximin. That rigour was his ruin: sunk and degraded as the senate was, and now but the shadow of a mighty name, it was found on this occasion to have long arms and dreadful digits for grappling with monsters even now in its closing stages of decay. Whatever might be the real weakness of this body, the rude soldiers yet felt a blind traditionary veneration for its sanction, when prompting them as patriots to an act which their own multiplied provocations had but too much recommended to their passions. The gigantic ploughman, whom they were invited by their august senate to kill, was now become hateful to themselves from many past severities, and no less dreadful than hateful in regard to the many similar favours in reversion which Big-Bones promised to pay at sight. Up to this time Thrace had been content to export gladiators for the use of Rome: but now she was beginning to export emperors. Could there be a happier wind-fall of luck than that he, whom beyond all men known it would be a luxury to kill, suddenly by the senate's order it had become a duty to kill? It was patriotism, it was virtue, by *senatûs consultum* or Act of Parliament, to kill this man. For the first time in their lives the soldiers found themselves on the highroad to be virtuous. They all agreed to be intensely virtuous; and for that purpose marched off in a body to the imperial tent. A select party, sword in hand, deputed themselves to wait upon the huge

hulk within: their words were not many: but in two minutes they had settled the long arrear between the parties. A deputation entered the tent of Maximin, and despatched the big old ruffian with the same unpitying haste which he had shown under similar circumstances to the gentle-minded Alexander. Aquileia opened her gates immediately, and thus made it evident that the war had been personal to Maximin.

A scene followed within a short time which is in the highest degree interesting. The senate, in creating two emperors at once (for the boy Gordian was probably associated to them only by way of masking their experiment), had made it evident that their purpose was to restore the old defunct republic and its two consuls. This was their meaning; and the experiment had now been twice repeated. The army saw through it: as to the double number of emperors, *that* was of little consequence, farther than as it expressed their intention, viz., by bringing back the consular government, to restore the power of the senate, and to abrogate that of the army. The prætorian troops, who were the most deeply interested in preventing any such revolution, watched their opportunity, and attacked the two emperors in the palace. The deadly feud which had already arisen between these rival Cæsars led each to suppose himself under assault from the other. The mistake was not of long duration. Carried into the streets of Rome, they were both put to death, and treated with monstrous indignities. The young Gordian was adopted by the soldiery. It seems odd that even thus far the guards should sanction the choice of the senate, having the purposes which they had; but perhaps Gordian had recommended himself to their favour in a degree which might outweigh what they considered the original vice of his appointment; and his

youth promised them at least an immediate impunity. This prince, however, like so many of his predecessors, soon came to an unhappy end. Under the guardianship of the upright Misitheus, for a time he prospered; and preparations were made upon a great scale for the energetic administration of a Persian war. But Misitheus died, perhaps by poison, in the course of the campaign; and to him succeeded, as prætorian prefect, an Arabian officer called Philip. The innocent boy, left without friends, was soon removed by murder; and a monument was afterwards erected to his memory, at the junction of the Aboras and the Euphrates. Great obscurity, however, clouds this part of history; nor is it so much as known in what way the Persian war was conducted or terminated.

Philip, having made himself emperor, celebrated, upon his arrival in Rome, the secular games, in the year 247 of the Christian era—that being the completion of a thousand years * from the foundation of Rome. But Nemesis was already on his steps. An insurrection had broken out amongst the legions stationed in Mœsia; and they had raised to the purple some officer of low rank. Philip, having occasion to notice this affair in the senate, received for answer from Decius, that probably the pseudo-

* "*The completion of a thousand years*,"—*i e.*, of a thousand years since the foundation of Rome, and not (let the reader observe) since the birth of Romulus. Subtract from 1000 (as the total lapse of years since the natal day of Rome) the number 247 as representing that part of the 1000 which had accumulated since the era of Christ, at the epoch of the Secular Games, and there will remain 753 for the sum of the years between Rome's nativity and the year of our Lord. But as Romulus must have reached manhood when he founded the robber city, suppose him 23 years old at that era, and his birth will fall in the year 776 before Christ. And this is the year generally assigned. But it must be remembered that there are dissentient schemes of chronology.

imperator would prove a mere evanescent phantom. This conjecture was confirmed; and Philip in consequence conceived a high opinion of Decius, whom (as the insurrection still continued) he judged to be the fittest man for suppressing it. Decius accordingly went, armed with the proper authority. But on his arrival, he found himself compelled by the insurgent army to choose between empire and death. Thus constrained, he yielded to the wishes of the troops; and then hastening with a veteran army into Italy, he fought the battle of Verona, where Philip was defeated and killed, whilst the son of Philip—need it be said?—was murdered at Rome by the prætorian guards.

With Philip ends, according to our distribution, the second series of the Cæsars, comprehending Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, and Geta, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander Severus, Maximin, the two Gordians, Pupienus and Balbinus, the third Gordian, and Philip the Arab.

In looking back at this series of Cæsars, we are horror-struck at the blood-stained picture. Well might a foreign writer, in reviewing the same succession, declare, that it is like passing into a new world when the transition is made from this chapter of the human history to that of modern Europe. From Commodus to Decius are sixteen names, which, spreading through a space of fifty-nine years, assign to each Cæsar a reign of less than four years. And Casaubon remarks, that, in one period of 160 years, there were seventy persons who assumed the Roman purple; which gives to each not much more than two years. On the other hand, in the history of France, we find that through a period of 1200 years there have been no more than sixty-four kings: upon an average, therefore, each king appears to have enjoyed a reign of nearly nineteen years. This vast difference in

security is due to two great principles,—that of primogeniture as between son and son, and of hereditary succession as between a son and every other pretender. Well may we hail the principle of hereditary right as realizing the praise of Burke applied to chivalry, viz., that it is "the cheap defence of nations;" for the security which is thus obtained, be it recollected, does not regard a small succession of princes, but the whole rights and interests of social man: since the contests for the rights of belligerent rivals do not respect themselves only, but very often spread ruin and proscription amongst all orders of men. The principle of hereditary succession, says one writer, had it been a discovery of any one individual, would deserve to be considered as the very greatest ever made; and he adds acutely, in answer to the obvious, but shallow objection to it (viz., its apparent assumption of equal ability in father and son for ever), that it is like the Copernican system of the heavenly bodies, so contradictory to our sense and first impressions, but true notwithstanding.

CHAPTER VI.

RETURNING to our sketch of the Cæsars,—at the head of the third series we place Decius. He came to the throne at a moment of great public embarrassment. The Goths were now beginning to press southwards upon the empire. Dacia they had ravaged for some time; "And here," says a German writer, "observe the shortsightedness of the Emperor Trajan. Had he left the Dacians in possession of their independence, they would, under their native kings, have made head against the Goths. But, being compelled to assume the character of Roman citizens, they had lost their warlike qualities. From Dacia the Goths had descended upon Mœsia; and, passing the Danube, they laid siege to Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister. The inhabitants paid a heavy ransom for their town; and the Goths were persuaded for the present to return home. But sooner than was expected, they returned to Mœsia, under their king, Kniva; and they were already engaged in the siege of Nicopolis, when Decius came in sight at the head of the Roman army. The Goths retired, but it was to Thrace; and, in the conquest of Philippopolis, they found an ample indemnity for their forced retreat and disappointment. Decius pursued, but the king of the Goths turned suddenly upon him; the emperor was obliged to fly; the Roman camp was plundered; Philippopolis was taken by storm; and its whole population, reputed at more than a hundred thousand souls, destroyed.

Such was the first great irruption of the barbarians into the Roman territory: and panic was diffused on the wings of the wind over the whole empire. Decius, however, was firm, and made prodigious efforts to restore the balance of power to its ancient settlement. For the moment he had some partial successes. He cut off several detachments of Goths, on their road to reinforce the enemy; and he strengthened the fortresses and garrisons of the Danube. But his last success was the means of his total ruin. He came up with the Goths at Forum Terebronii, and, having surrounded their position, he had good reason to think their destruction inevitable. A great battle ensued, and a mighty victory to the Goths. Nothing is now known of the circumstances, except that the third line of the Romans was entangled inextricably in a morass (as had happened in the Persian expedition of Alexander). Decius perished on this occasion, nor was it possible to find his dead body. It does not absolutely follow from the mere fact uncircumstantiated of Decius having been a persecuting anti-Christian, that he must have been a bad man. But this is an inference too probable from the rancorous fury of his persecution. To *his* reign belongs the legend of the Seven Sleepers, a septemvirate of Christian youths, who sought an asylum from the imperial wrath in the recesses of a cavern; fell asleep; and first of all awakened from their slumbers some four generations later; found their persecutor utterly forgotten; and themselves restored to an inheritance of hopes no longer irreconcilable with the demands of their religious conscience. This great defeat naturally raised the authority of the Senate, in the same proportion as it depressed that of the army; and by the will of that body, Hostilianus, a son of Decius, was raised to the empire; with Gallus however, an experienced commander, for his associate. Ostensibly, the

reason assigned for this measure was the youth of Hostilianus: but in reality, the whole arrangement was governed by the secret policy of the Senate for restoring the consulate, and the ancient machinery of the Republic. But no skill or experience could avail to retrieve the sinking power of Rome upon the Illyrian frontier. The Roman army was disorganized, panic-stricken, reduced to skeleton battalions. Without an army, what could be done? And thus it may really have been no blame to Gallus, that he made a treaty with the Goths more degrading than any parallel act in the long annals of Rome. By the terms of this infamous bargain, the enemy were allowed to carry off an immense booty, amongst which was a long roll of distinguished prisoners; and Cæsar himself it was—not any lieutenant or agent that might have been afterwards disavowed—who volunteered to purchase their future absence by an annual tribute. The very army which had brought their emperor into the necessity of submitting to such abject concessions, were the first to take offence at this natural result of their own failures. Gallus was already ruined in public opinion, when further revelations deepened the shadows of his disgrace. It was now supposed to have been discovered, that the late dreadful overthrow of Forum Terebronii was due to his individual false counsels, however much of the disaster must according to rule and custom be laid at the door of Decius, who could not be divested of his supreme responsibility; and, as the young Hostilianus happened to die about this time of a contagious disorder, Gallus was charged with his murder. Even a ray of prosperity, which just now gleamed upon the Roman arms, aggravated the disgrace of Gallus, and was instantly made the handle of his ruin. Æmilianus, the governor of Mœsia and Pannonia, inflicted some loss, whether damage or disgrace, upon the

Goths; and in the enthusiasm of sudden pride, upon an occasion which contrasted so advantageously for him with the military conduct of Decius and Gallus, the soldiers of his own legion raised Æmilianus to the purple. No time was to be lost. Summoned by the troops, Æmilianus marched into Italy; and no sooner had he made his appearance there, than the prætorian guards murdered the Emperor Gallus and his son Volusianus, by way of confirming the election of Æmilianus. The new emperor offered to secure the frontiers, both on the east and on the Danube, from the incursions of the barbarians. This offer may be regarded as thrown out for the conciliation of all classes in the empire. But to the Senate, in particular, he addressed a message, which forcibly illustrates the political position of that body in those times. Æmilianus proposed to resign the whole civil administration into the hands of the Senate, reserving to himself only the unenviable burthen of the military interests. His hope was, that in this way making himself in part the creation of the Senate, he might strengthen his title against competitors at Rome, whilst the entire military administration going on under his own eyes, exclusively directed to that one object, would give him some chance of defeating the hasty and tumultuary competitions so apt to arise amongst the legions upon the frontier. In these calculations of Æmilianus, the reader will notice—as one most impressive and ominous phenomenon—that all his anxiety is directed to intrigues and the balancing of parties at home, and no particle of his care pointed to the enemy outside. Such a policy might really be required: but in this necessity lay the deepest argument and gloomiest pledge of public ruin. We notice the transaction chiefly as indicating the anomalous situation of the Senate. Without power in a proper sense, or no more,

however, than the indirect power of wealth, that ancient body retained an immense *auctoritas;* that is, an influence built upon ancient reputation, which, in their case, had the strength of a religious superstition in all Italian minds. This influence the senators exerted with effect, whenever the course of events had happened to cripple the army, or to prostrate the momentary Cæsar. And never did they make a more continuous and sustained effort for retrieving their ancient power and place, together with the whole system of the republic, than during the period at which we have now arrived. From the time of Maximin, in fact, to the accession of Aurelian, the Senate perpetually interposed their credit and authority, like some *Deus ex machinâ* in dramatic catastrophes. And if this one fact were all that had survived of the public annals at this period, we might sufficiently collect the situation of the two other parties in the empire—the army and the imperator; the weakness and precarious tenure of the one, and the anarchy of the other. And hence it is that we can explain the hatred borne to the Senate by vigorous emperors, such as Aurelian, succeeding to a long course of weak and troubled reigns. Such an emperor presumed in the Senate, and not without reason, that same spirit of domineering interference as ready to manifest itself, upon any opportunity offered, against himself, which in his earlier days, he had witnessed so repeatedly in successful operation upon the fates and prospects of others.

The situation indeed of the world—meaning by "*the world*" (or, in the phrase then current, ἡ οἰκουμένη), that great centre of civilisation, which, running round the Mediterranean in one continuous belt of great breadth, still composed the Roman Empire—was at this time profoundly interesting. The crisis had arrived. In the East, a new dynasty (the Sassanides) had remoulded ancient elements

into a new form, and breathed a new life into an empire, which else was gradually becoming crazy, or even palsied, from age, and which, at any rate, by losing its unity, must have lost its vigour as an offending power. Parthia was languishing and drooping as an anti-Roman state, when the last of the Arsacidæ expired. A perfect *Palingenesis* was wrought by the restorer of the Persian empire, which pretty nearly re-occupied (and gloried in re-occupying) the very area that had once composed the empire of Cyrus. Even this *Palingenesis* might have terminated in a divided empire: vigour might have been restored, but in the shape of a polyarchy (such as the Saxons established in England), rather than a monarchy; and in reality, at one moment, that appeared to be a probable event. Now, had this been the course of the revolution, an alliance with one of these kingdoms would have tended to balance the hostility of any other (as was in fact the case when Alexander Severus saved himself from the Persian power by a momentary alliance with Armenia). But all the elements of disorder had in that quarter re-combined themselves into severe unity; and thus was Rome, upon her eastern frontier, laid open to a new power ebullient with juvenile activity and vigour, just at the period when the languor of the decaying Parthian had allowed the Roman discipline to fall into a corresponding declension. Such was the condition of Rome upon her oriental frontier.* On the northern it was much worse. Precisely at the crisis of a great revolution in Asia, which demanded in that quarter more than the total strength of the empire, and threatened to demand it for

* And it is a striking illustration of the extent to which the revolution had gone, that previously to the Persian expedition of the last Gordian, Antioch, the Roman capital of Syria, had been occupied by the enemy.

ages to come, did the Goths, under their earliest denominations of *Getæ*, with many other associate tribes, begin to push with their horns against the northern gates of the empire: the whole line of the Danube, and, pretty nearly about the same time, of rivers more western (upon which tribes from Swabia and Franconia were beginning to gather in terrific masses), now became insecure; and the great rivers ceased in effect to be the barriers of Rome. Taking a middle point of time between the Parthian revolution and the fatal overthrow of Forum Terebronii, we may fix upon the reign of Philip the Arab (who naturalized himself in Rome by the appellation of Marcus Julius), as the epoch from which the Roman empire, already sapped and undermined by changes from within, began steadily to give way from without. And this reign dates itself in the series by those ever-memorable secular or jubilee games, which celebrated the thousandth year from the foundation of Rome.*

Resuming our sketch of the Imperial history, we may remark the natural embarrassment which must have possessed the Senate, when two candidates for the purple were equally earnest in appealing to *them*, and their deliberate choice, as the best foundation for a valid election. Scarcely had the ground been cleared for Æmilianus, by the murder of Gallus and his son (the invariable clearance of the stage in the succession of Cæsars!) when Valerian, a Roman senator (of such eminent merit, and confessedly so much the

* This Arab emperor reigned about five years; and the jubilee celebration occurred in his second year. Another circumstance gives importance to the Arabian, that, according to one tradition, he was the first Christian emperor. If so, it is singular that one of the bitterest persecutors of Christianity should have been his immediate successor—viz., Decius.

foremost noble in all the qualities essential to the very delicate and comprehensive functions of a Censor,* that Decius had revived that office expressly in his behalf), entered Italy at the head of the army from Gaul. He had been summoned to his aid by the late emperor, Gallus; but, arriving too late for his support, he determined to avenge him. Both Æmilianus and Valerian recognised the authority of the Senate, and professed to act under that sanction; but it was

* It has proved a most difficult problem, in the hands of all speculators upon the imperial history, to throw any light upon the purposes of the Emperor Decius, in attempting the revival of the ancient but necessarily obsolete office of a public censorship. Either it was an act of pure verbal pedantry, or a mere titular decoration of honour (as if a modern prince should create a person Arch-Grand-Elector, with no objects assigned to his electing faculty), or else, if it really meant to revive the old duties of the censorship, and to assign the very same field for the exercise of those duties, it must be viewed as the very grossest practical anachronism that has ever been committed. We mean by an anachronism, in common usage, that sort of blunder when a man ascribes to one age the habits, customs, or the inalienable characteristics of another. This, however, may be a mere lapse of memory, as to a matter of fact, and implying nothing at all discreditable to the understanding, but only that a man has shifted the boundaries of chronology a little this way or that; as if, for example, a writer should speak of printed books as existing at the day of Agincourt, whereas that battle [A.D. 1415] preceded the invention of printing by nearly thirty years, or of artillery as existing in the first Crusade, here would be an error, but a very venial one. A far worse kind of anachronism, though rarely noticed as such, is where a writer ascribes sentiments and modes of thought incapable of co-existing with the sort or the degree of civilisation then attained, or otherwise incompatible with the structure of society in the age or the country assigned. For instance, in Southey's *Don Roderick* there is a cast of sentiment in the Gothic king's remorse and contrition of heart, which has struck many readers as utterly unsuitable to the social and moral development of that age, and redolent of modern Methodism. This, however, we mention only as an illustration without wishing to hazard an opinion upon the justice of that criticism. But even such an anachronism is

the soldiery that cut the knot, as usual, by the sword. Æmilianus was encamped at Spoleto; but as the enemy drew near, his soldiers, shrinking no doubt from a contest with veteran troops, made their peace by murdering the new emperor, and Valerian was elected in his stead. This prince was already an old man at the time of his election; but he lived long enough to look back upon the day of his inauguration as the blackest in his life. Memorable were

less startling and extravagant when it is confined to an ideal representation of things, than where it is practically embodied and brought into play amongst the realities of life. What would be thought of a man who should attempt, in 1833, to revive the ancient office of *Fool*, as it existed down to the reign of Henry VIII. in England? Yet the error of the Emperor Decius was far greater, if he did in sincerity and good faith believe that the Rome of his times was amenable to that license of unlimited correction, and of interference with private affairs, which republican freedom and simplicity had not conceded to the censor. In reality the ancient censor, in some parts of his office, was neither more nor less than a compendious legislator. Acts of attainder, divorce bills, &c., illustrate the case in England; they are cases of law, modified to meet the case of an individual; and the censor, having a sort of equity jurisdiction, was intrusted with discretionary powers for reviewing, revising, and amending, *pro re nata*, whatever in the private life of a Roman citizen seemed, to his experienced eye, alien to the simplicity of an austere republic; whatever tended to excess in household expenditure, according to their rude notions of political economy; and, generally, whatever touched the interests of the commonwealth, though not falling within the general province of legislation, either because it might appear undignified in its circumstances, or too narrow in its range of operation for a public anxiety, or because considerations of delicacy and prudence might render it unfit for a public scrutiny. Take one case, drawn from actual experience, as an illustration: A Roman nobleman, under one of the early emperors, had thought fit, by way of increasing his income, to retire into rural lodgings, or into some small villa, whilst his splendid mansion in Rome was let to a rich tenant. That a man who wore the *laticlave* (which in practical effect of splendour we may consider equal to the ribbon and star of a modern order), should de-

the calamities which fell upon himself, and upon the empire, during his reign. He began by associating to himself his son Gallienus; partly, perhaps, for his own relief in public business, partly to indulge the Senate in their steady plan of dividing the imperial authority. The two emperors undertook the military defence of the empire, Gallienus proceeding to the northern frontier, Valerian to the eastern. Under Gallienus, the Franks—otherwise *Franci*, who gave

scend to such a degrading method of raising money, was felt as a scandal to the whole nobility.* Yet what could be done? To have interfered with his conduct by an express law, would be to infringe the sacred rights of property, and to say, in effect, that a man should not do what he would with his own. This would have been a remedy far worse than the evil to which it was applied; nor could it have been possible so to shape the principle of a law, as not to make it far more comprehensive than the momentary occasion demanded. The senator's trespass was in a matter of decorum: but the law would

* This feeling still exists in France "One winter," says the author of *The English Army in France*, vol ii pp 106-7, "our commanding officer's wife formed the project of hiring the château during the absence of the owner, but a more profound insult could not have been offered to a Chevalier de St Louis Hire his house! What could these people take him for? A sordid wretch who would stoop to make money by such means? They ought to be ashamed of themselves He could never respect an Englishman again" "And yet," adds the writer, "this gentleman (had an officer been billeted there) would have *sold* him a bottle of wine out of his cellar, or a cwt. of wood from his stack, or an egg from his hen-house, at a profit of fifty per cent, not only without scruple, but upon no other terms. It was as common as ordering wine at a tavern, to call the servant of any man's establishment where we happened to be quartered, and demand an account of the cellar, as well as the price of the wine we selected'" This feeling existed, and perhaps to the same extent, two centuries ago, in England. Not only did the aristocracy think it a degradation to act the part of landlord with respect to their own houses, but also, except in select cases, to act that of tenant Thus the first Lord Brooke, (the famous Fulke Greville), who wished it to be inscribed on his tomb—*Here lies the Friend of Sir Philip Sidney*, and left writings (both prose and verse) obscure, it is true, but often full of profound thinking, writing to inform his next neighbour, a woman of rank, that the house she occupied had been purchased by a London citizen, confesses his fears that he shall in consequence lose so valuable a neighbour: for doubtless, he adds, your ladyship will not remain a tenant to "such a fellow" And yet this "fellow," whom it would be infamy to accept for a landlord, had notoriously held the office of Lord Mayor, which made him for the time a privy councillor, and consequently *Right Honourable* The Italians of this day make no scruple to let off the whole, or even part, of their fine mansions to strangers

name to France, otherwise Φράγγοι (in pronunciation Franghoi), otherwise (as in Persia and Hindostan) Feringhees, or as by the Ottoman Turks they were called Varangians (see Sir Walter Scott's *Count Robert of Paris*)—began first to make themselves heard of. Breaking into Gaul, they passed through that country into Spain; captured Tarragona in their route; crossed over to Africa; and conquered Mauritania or Morocco. At the same time, the Alemanni, who

have trespassed on the first principles of justice. Here, then, was a case within the jurisdiction of the censor; he took notice, in his public report, of the senator's error; or probably, before coming to that extremity, he admonished him privately. Just as, in England, had there been such an officer, he would have reproved those men of rank about the era of Waterloo, who patronized the *Whip Club*, or the pugilistic *Fancy*, or rode their own horses in a match on a public race course. Such a reproof, however, unless practically operative, and powerfully supported by the whole body of the aristocracy, would recoil upon its author as a piece of impertinence, and would soon be resented as an unwarrantable liberty taken with private rights; the censor would be kicked, or challenged to private combat, according to the taste of the parties aggrieved. The office is clearly in this dilemma: if the censor is supported by the state, then he combines in his own person both legislative and executive functions, and possesses a power which is frightfully irresponsible; if, on the other hand, he is left to such support as he can find in the prevailing spirit of manners, and the old traditionary veneration for his own official character, he stands very much in the situation of a priesthood, which has great power or none at all, according to the condition of a country in moral and religious feeling, coupled with the more or less primitive state of manners. How, then, with any rational prospect of success, could Decius attempt the revival of an office depending so entirely on moral supports, in an age when all those supports were withdrawn? The prevailing spirit of manners was hardly fitted to sustain even a toleration of such an office so far from promising to it a conniving indulgence; and as to the traditionary veneration for its sacred character, *that*, probably from long disuse of its practical functions, was altogether extinct. If these considerations are plain and intelligible even to us, by the men of that day they must have been felt with a degree of force that could leave no room for doubt or speculation on the matter. How was it, then,

had been in motion since the time of Caracalla, broke into Lombardy, across the Rhætian Alps. The Senate, left without aid from either emperor, were obliged to make preparations for the common defence against this host of barbarians. Luckily, the very magnitude of the enemy's success, by overloading him with booty, made it his interest to retire without fighting; and the degraded Senate, hanging upon the traces of their retiring footsteps, without fighting or

that the emperor only should have been blind to such general light?

In the absence of all other, even conjectural solutions of this difficulty, we will state our own theory of the matter. Decius, as is evident from his fierce persecution of the Christians, was not disposed to treat Christianity with indifference, under any form which it might assume, or however masked. Yet there were quarters in which it lurked not liable to the ordinary modes of attack. Christianity was creeping up with inaudible steps into high places,—nay, into the very highest. The immediate predecessor of Decius upon the throne, Philip the Arab, was supposed (some said was *known*) to be a disciple of the new faith; and amongst the nobles of Rome, through the females and the slaves (two orders of society often far asunder in rank, but agreeing in this—that to *them* exclusively the *nurseries* from cottage upwards to the most superb of palaces, were unavoidably open), that faith had spread its roots in every direction. Some secrecy, however, attached to the profession of a religion so often proscribed. Who should presume to tear away the mask which prudence or timidity had taken up? A *delator*, or professional informer, was an infamous character. To deal with the noble and illustrious, the descendants of the Marcelli and the Gracchi, there must be nothing less than a great state officer, supported by the imperator and the Senate, having an unlimited privilege of scrutiny and censure, authorized to inflict the brand of infamy for offences not challenged by the letter of the law—an office emanating from an elder institution, familiar to the days of reputed liberty. Such an officer was the censor; and such, according to *our* solution of the case, were the antichristian puposes of Decius in his revival. Not the prestige, nor the *auctoritas*, of the censor was what Decius coveted—but his power of sneaking and wriggling into households. The Censor was a Right Hon. Sneak.

daring to fight, claimed the honours of a victory. Even then, however, they did more than was agreeable to the jealousies of Gallienus, who by an edict publicly rebuked their presumption, and forbade them in future to appear amongst the legions, or to exercise any military functions: for, in the eternal conflict of Senate and Cæsar, this late apparition of the Senate formed a bad precedent. Gallienus himself, meanwhile, could devise no better way of providing for the public security, than by marrying the daughter of his chief enemy, the king of the Marcomanni. On this side of Europe the barbarians were thus quieted for the present; but the Goths of the Ukraine, in three marauding expeditions of unprecedented violence, ravaged the wealthy regions of Asia Minor, as well as the islands of the Ægean Archipelago; and at length, under the guidance of deserters, landed in the port of the Pyræus, which bears the same maritime relation to Athens, that Leith does to Edinburgh. Advancing from this point, after sacking Athens and the chief cities of Greece, they marched on Epirus, and began to threaten Italy. But the defection at this crisis of a conspicuous chieftain, and the burden of their booty, made these wild marauders anxious to provide for a safe retreat; the imperial commanders in Mœsia listened eagerly to their offers: and it set the seal to the public dishonours, that, after having traversed so vast a territory almost without resistance, these ruffians were now suffered to retire under the very guardianship of those whom they had visited with military execution.

Such were the terms upon which the Emperor Gallienus purchased a brief respite from his haughty enemies. For the moment, however, he *did* enjoy security. Far otherwise was the destiny of his unhappy father. Sapor now ruled in Persia; the throne of Armenia had vainly striven to maintain its independency against his armies, and the

daggers of his hired assassins. This revolution, which so much enfeebled the Roman means of war, exactly in that proportion increased the necessity for it. War, and that instantly, seemed to offer the only chance for maintaining the Roman name or existence in Asia. Carrhæ and Nisibis, the two potent fortresses in Mesopotamia, had fallen; and the Persian arms were now triumphant on the right bank not less than on the left bank of the Euphrates. Valerian was not of a character to look with indifference upon such a scene, terminated by such a prospect; prudence and temerity, fear and confidence, all spoke a common language in this great emergency; and Valerian marched toward the Euphrates with a fixed purpose of driving the enemy beyond that river. By whose mismanagement the records of history do not enable us to say; some think of Macrianus, the prætorian prefect, some of Valerian himself; but doubtless by the treachery of guides co-operating with errors in the general, the Roman army, according to a fate which had now become as periodically recurrent as any tertian or quartan fever, was entangled in marshy ground; partial actions followed, and skirmishes of cavalry, in which the Romans suddenly awoke to a ghastly consciousness of their situation: retreat was cut off, advance was barred, and to fight was now found to be without hope. In these circumstances they offered to capitulate. But the haughty Sapor would listen to nothing short of unconditional surrender; and to that course the unhappy emperor submitted. Various traditions* have been preserved by history concerning the

* Some of these traditions have been preserved, which represent Sapor as using his imperial captive for his *horse-block* or *anabathrum*, in mounting his horse. Others, which is irreconcilable with this tale, allege that Sapor actually flayed his unhappy prisoner while yet alive. The temptation to these stories was perhaps found in the

fate of Valerian: all agree that he died in misery and captivity; but some have circumstantiated this general statement by features of excessive misery and special degradation. But these were perhaps added afterwards as picturesque improvements of the scenical interest, or by ethical writers, in order to point and strengthen the moral. Gallienus now ruled alone, except as regarded the restless efforts of insurgent pretenders to the purple, thirty of whom are said to have arisen in his single reign. This, however, is probably an exaggeration. Nineteen such ambitious rebels are mentioned by name; of whom the chief were Calpurnius Piso, a Roman senator; Tetricus, a man of rank who claimed a descent from Pompey, from Crassus, and even from Numa Pompilius, and maintained himself some time in Gaul and Spain; Trebellianus, who founded a republic of robbers in Isauria which survived himself by centuries; and Odenathus, the Syrian. Others were mere *Terræ filii*, or adventurers, who flourished and decayed in a few days or weeks; and of these the most remarkable was a working armourer named Marius. Not one of the whole number eventually prospered, except Odenathus; and he, though originally a rebel, yet, in consideration of services against Persia, was suffered to retain, and to transmit his pretty kingdom of Palmyra* to his widow Zenobia. He was even complimented

craving for the marvellous, and in the desire to make the contrast more striking between the two extremes in Valerian's life.

* Palmyra, the Scriptural *Tadmor in the wilderness*, to which in our days Lady Hester Stanhope (niece to the great minister Pitt, and seventy times seven more orientally proud, though daughter of the freeborn nation, than ever was Zenobia that from infancy trode on the necks of slaves) made her way from Damascus, at some risk, amongst clouds of Arabs, she riding the whole way on horseback in the centre of robber tribes, and with a train such as that of sultans or of Roman pro-consuls.

with the absurd title of Augustus (*i.e.*, of *Sebastus*, as in a Greek city). All the rest perished. Their rise, however, and local prosperity at so many different points of the empire, showed the distracted condition of the state, and its internal weakness. That again proclaimed its external peril. No other cause had called forth this diffusive spirit of insurrection than the general consciousness, so fatally warranted, of the debility which had now emasculated the government, and its incompetency to deal vigorously with the public enemies.* The very granaries of Rome, Sicily and Egypt, were the seats of continued *émeutes*, or (in language more commensurate) of convulsions; in Alexandria, the second city of the empire, there was even a civil war which lasted for twelve years. Dissension, misery, and morbid symptoms, and frenzied movements of ambition, expressed themselves by sullen mutterings or whispers over the whole face of the empire.

The last of the rebels who directed his rebellion personally against Gallienus was Aureolus. Passing the Rhætian Alps, this leader sought out and defied the emperor. He was defeated, and retreated upon Milan; but Gallienus, in pursuing him, was lured into an ambuscade, and perished from the wound inflicted by an archer. With his dying breath he is said to have recommended Claudius to the favour of the Senate; and at all events Claudius it was who succeeded. Scarcely was the new emperor installed, before he was summoned to a trial not only arduous in itself, but

* And this incompetency was *permanently* increased by rebellions that might be brief and fugitive in all other effects. In this particular effect the most trivial and fleeting insurrections left durable scars, since each separate insurgent almost necessarily maintained himself for the moment by spoliations and robberies which left lasting effects behind them; and too often he was tempted to ally himself with some foreign enemy amongst the barbarians, who perhaps in this way gained an introduction into the heart of the empire.

terrific by the very name of the enemy. The Goths of the Ukraine, in a new armament of six thousand vessels, had again descended by the Bosphorus into the south, and had sat down before Thessalonica, the capital at that time of Macedonia. Claudius marched against them with the determination to vindicate the Roman name and honour: "Know," said he, writing to the Senate, "that 320,000 Goths have set foot upon the Roman soil. Should I conquer them, your gratitude will be my reward. Should I fall, do not forget who it is that I have succeeded; and that the commonwealth is exhausted." No sooner did the Goths hear of his approach, than, with transports of ferocious joy, they gave up the siege, and hurried to annihilate the last pillar of the empire. The mighty battle which ensued, neither party seeking to evade it, took place at Naissus. At one time the legions were giving way, when suddenly, by some happy manœuvre of the emperor, a Roman corps found its way to the rear of the enemy. The Goths gave way in *their* turn, and their defeat was total. According to most accounts they left 50,000 dead upon the field; probably a plausible guess from some great arithmetician. The campaign still lingered, however, at other points, until at last the emperor succeeded in driving back the relics of the Gothic host into the fastnesses of the Balkan;* and there the greater part of them died of hunger and pestilence. These great services performed, within two years from his accession to the throne, Claudius, by the rarest of fates, died in his bed at Sirmium, the capital of

* "*Balkan:*"—A Russian general in our own day, for crossing this difficult range of mountains as a victor, was by the Czar Nicholas raised to the title of *Balkanski.* But it seems there should rightfully have been an elder creation. Claudius might have pre-occupied the ground as the original Balkanski.

Pannonia. His brother Quintilius, who had a great command in Aquileia, immediately assumed the purple; but his usurpation lasted only seventeen days; for the last emperor, with a single eye to the public good, had recommended Aurelian as his successor, guided by his personal knowledge of that general's strategic qualities. The army of the Danube confirmed the appointment; and Quintilius upon that decision committed suicide. Aurelian was of the same harsh and forbidding character, but with the same qualities of energy and decision, as the Emperor Severus: he had, however, the qualities demanded by the times; stern and resolute, not amiable princes, were needed by the exigencies of the state. The hydra-headed Goths were again in the field on the Illyrian quarter: Italy itself was invaded by the Alemanni; and Tetricus, the rebel, still survived as a monument exemplifying the weakness of Gallienus. All these enemies were speedily repressed or vanquished by Aurelian. But it marks the real declension of the empire, a declension which no personal vigour in the emperor was any longer sufficient to disguise, that, even in the midst of victory, Aurelian found it necessary to make a formal surrender, by treaty, of that Dacia which Trajan had united with so much ostentation to the empire. Europe was now again in repose; and Aurelian found himself at liberty to apply his powers as a re-organizer and restorer to the East. In that quarter of the world a marvellous revolution had occurred. The little oasis of Palmyra, from a Roman colony, had grown into the leading province of a great empire. This verdant island of the desert, together with Syria and Egypt, formed an independent and most insolent monarchy under the sceptre of Zenobia.*

* Zenobia is complimented by all historians for her magnanimity; but with no foundation in truth. Her first salutation to Aurelian was

After two battles lost in Syria, Zenobia retreated to Palmyra. With great difficulty* Aurelian pursued her; and with still greater difficulty he pressed the siege of Palmyra. Zenobia looked for relief from Persia; but at that moment Sapor died, and the Queen of Palmyra fled upon a dromedary, but was pursued and captured. Palmyra surrendered and was spared; but unfortunately, with a folly which marks the haughty spirit of the place untrained to face the chances of ordinary experiences, scarcely had the conquering army retired when a tumult arose, and the Roman garrison (of 600 men) was slaughtered. Little knowledge could those have had of Aurelian's character, who tempted him to acts but too welcome to his cruel nature by such an outrage as this. The news overtook the emperor on the Hellespont. Earth has witnessed no such jubilant explosion of vindictive hatred, unless it were in the retaliation (too probably just, as we *now*, 1859, can guess), by Nadir Shah,† on the perfidious citizens of Delhi for a similar massacre of the garrison which he had left behind. Instantly, without pause, "like Até hot from hell," Aurelian retraced his steps, reached the guilty city, and consigned it, with all its population, to that utter destruction from which it has never since arisen. The energetic administration of Aurelian had now restored the empire—not to

a specimen of abject flattery; and her last *public* words were evidences of the basest treachery in giving up her generals, and her chief counsellor Longinus, to the vengeance of the ungenerous enemy

* "*Difficulty!*"—Difficulty from what? We presume from scarcity of provisions, and (as regarded the siege) scarcity of wood. But mark how these vaunted and vaunting Romans, so often as they found themselves in our modern straits, sat down to cry. Heavier by far have been our British perplexities upon many an Oriental field; but did we sit down to cry?

† Otherwise known as Kouli Khan.

its lost vigour, that was impossible—but to a condition of repose. This was a condition more agreeable to the empire than to the emperor. Peace was hateful to Aurelian; and he sought for war, where it could seldom be sought in vain, upon the Persian frontier. But he was not destined to reach the Euphrates; and it is worthy of notice, as a providential ordinance, that his own unmerciful nature was the ultimate cause of his fate. Anticipating the emperor's severity in punishing some errors of his own, Mucassor, a general officer in whom Aurelian placed especial confidence, assassinated him between Byzantium and Heraclea. An interregnum of eight months succeeded, during which there occurred a contest of a memorable nature. Some historians have described it as strange and surprising. To us, on the contrary, it seems that no contest could be more natural. Heretofore the great strife had been in what way to secure the reversion or possession of that great dignity; whereas now the rivalship lay in declining it. But surely such a competition had in it, under the circumstances of the empire, little that can justly surprise us. Always a post of danger, and so regularly closed by assassination, that in a course of two centuries there are hardly to be found three or four cases of exception, the imperatorial dignity had now become burdened with a public responsibility which exacted great military talents, and imposed a perpetual and personal activity. Formerly, if the emperor knew himself to be surrounded with assassins, he might at least make his throne, so long as he enjoyed it, the couch of a voluptuary. The "*Ave imperator!*" was then the summons, if to the supremacy in passive danger, so also to the supremacy in power, and honour, and enjoyment. But now it was a summons to never-ending tumults and alarms, an injunction to that sort of vigilance without intermission, which,

even from the poor sentinel, is exacted only when on duty. Not Rome, but the frontier; not the *aurea domus*, but a camp, was the imperial residence. Power and rank, whilst in that residence, could be had in no larger measure by Cæsar *as* Cæsar, than by the same individual as a military commander-in-chief; and, as to enjoyment, *that* for the Roman imperator was now extinct. Rest there could be none for him. Battle was the tenure by which he held his office; and beyond the range of his trumpet's blare, his sceptre was a broken reed. The office of Cæsar at this time resembled the situation (as it is sometimes described in romances) of a knight who has achieved the favour of some capricious lady, with the present possession of her castle and ample domains, but which he holds under the known and accepted condition of meeting all challenges whatsoever offered at the gate by wandering strangers, and also of jousting at any moment with each and all amongst the inmates of the castle, as often as a wish might arise to benefit by the chances in disputing his supremacy.

It is a circumstance, moreover, to be noticed in the aspect of the Roman monarchy at this period, that the pressure of the evils we are now considering, applied to this particular age of the empire beyond all others, as being an age of transition from a greater to an inferior power. Had the power been either greater or conspicuously less, in that proportion would the pressure have been easier, or none at all. Being greater, for example, the danger would have been repelled to a distance so great that mere remoteness would have disarmed its terrors, or otherwise it would have been violently overawed. Being less, on the other hand, and less in an eminent degree, it would have disposed all parties, as it did at an after period, to regular and formal compromises in the shape of fixed annual tributes. At present

the policy of the barbarians along the vast line of the northern frontier, was, to tease and irritate the provinces which they were not entirely able, or were prudentially unwilling, to dismember. Yet, as the almost annual irruptions were at every instant ready to be converted into *coup-de-mains* upon Aquileia, upon Verona, or even upon Rome herself; unless vigorously curbed at the outset, each emperor at this period found himself under the necessity of standing in the attitude of a champion or *propugnator* on the frontier line of his territory, ready for all comers, and with a pretty certain prospect of having one pitched battle at the least to fight in every successive summer. There were nations abroad at this epoch in Europe who did not migrate occasionally, or occasionally project themselves upon the civilized portion of the globe, but who made it their steady, regular occupation to do so, and lived for no other purpose. Through seven hundred years the Roman Republic might be styled a republic militant: for about one century further it was an empire triumphant; and now, long retrograde, it had reached that point at which again, but in a different sense, it might be styled an empire militant. Originally it had militated for glory and power; now its militancy was for a free movement of aspiring and hopeful existence. War was again the trade of Rome, as it had been once before; but in that earlier period war had been its highest ambition; now it was its dire necessity.

Under this analysis of the Roman condition, need we wonder, with the crowd of unreflecting historians, that the Senate, at the era of Aurelian's death, should dispute amongst each other; not, as once, for the possession of the sacred purple, but for the luxury and safety of declining it? The sad pre-eminence was finally imposed upon Tacitus, a senator who traced his descent from the historian of that name.

He had reached an age of seventy-five years, and possessed a fortune of three millions sterling.* Vainly did the agitated old senator open his lips to decline the perilous honour; five hundred voices insisted upon the necessity of his compliance; he was actually hustled into empire, and thus, as a foreign writer observes, was the descendant of him whose glory it had been to signalize himself as the hater of despotism, under the absolute necessity of becoming, in his own person, an unrelenting despot.

This aged senator was thus compelled to be emperor, and to exchange the voluptuous repose of a palace, which he was never to revisit, for the hardships of a distant camp. His first act was strikingly illustrative of the Roman condition, as we have just described it. Aurelian had attempted to disarm one set of enemies by turning the current of their fury upon another. The Alani were in search of plunder, and strongly disposed to obtain it from Roman provinces. "No, no," said Aurelian; "if you do that, I shall unchain my legions upon you. Be better advised: keep those excellent dispositions of mind, and that admirable taste for plunder, until you come whither I will conduct you. Then discharge your fury, and welcome; besides which, I will pay you wages for your immediate abstinence; and on the other side the Euphrates you shall pay yourselves." Such was the outline of the contract; and the Alans had accordingly held themselves in readiness to accompany Aurelian from Europe

* "*A fortune of three millions sterling:*"—Whence came these enormous fortunes? Several sources might be indicated: but amongst them perhaps the commonest was this—every citizen of marked distinction made it a practice, if circumstances favoured, to leave a legacy to others of the same class whom he happened to esteem, or wished to acknowledge as special friends. A very good custom, more honoured in the observance than the breach, and particularly well suited to our own merits.

to his meditated Persian campaign. Meantime, that emperor had perished by treason; and the Alani were still waiting for his successor on the throne to complete his engagements with themselves, that successor—if inheriting his throne—inheriting also in *their* judgment his total responsibilities. It happened, from the state of the empire, as we have sketched it above, that Tacitus really *did* succeed to the military plans of Aurelian. The Persian expedition was ordained to go forward; and Tacitus began, as a preliminary step in that expedition, to look about for his good allies the barbarians. Where might they be, and —what doing? Naturally, they had long been weary of waiting. The Persian booty might be good after *its* kind; but it was far away; and, *en attendant*, Roman booty was doubtless good after *its* kind. And so, throughout the provinces of Cappadocia, Pontus, &c., far as the eye could stretch, nothing was to be seen but cities and villages in flames. The Roman army hungered and thirsted to be unmuzzled and slipped upon these false friends. But this, for the present, Tacitus would not allow. He began by punctually fulfilling to the letter Aurelian's contract,—a measure which barbarians inevitably construed into the language of fear. But then came the retribution. Once having satisfied public justice, the emperor was now free for vengeance: he unchained his legions: a brief space of time sufficed for the settlement of a long reckoning: and through every outlet of Asia Minor the Alani fled from the wrath of the Roman soldier. Here, however, terminated the military labours of Tacitus: he died at Tyana* in Cappadocia, as some say, from the effects of the climate, co-operating

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* "*Tyana*:"—A city rendered famous as the birthplace and residence of that Apollonius whose conjurings and magical exploits were paraded in the early stages of Christianity, as eclipsing the miracles of the New Testament.

with irritations from the insolence of the soldiery : but, as Zosimus and Zonaras expressly assure us, under the murderous hands of his own troops. It was certainly disagreeable to be murdered ; but else the old senator had not much to complain of, as seventy-five to seventy-six years make a fair allowance of life. His brother Florianus at first usurped the purple, by the aid of the Illyrian army ; but the choice of other armies, afterwards confirmed by the Senate, settled upon Probus, a general already celebrated under Aurelian. The two competitors drew near to each other for the usual decision by the sword, when the dastardly supporters of Florian offered up their chosen prince as the purchase-money of a compromise with his antagonist. Probus, settled in his seat by the usual quantity of murder and perfidy, addressed himself to the regular business of those times,—to the reduction of insurgent provinces, and the liberation of others from hostile molestations. Isauria and Egypt he visited in the character of a conqueror ; Gaul in the character of a deliverer. From the Gaulish provinces he chased in succession the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Lygians. He pursued the intruders far into their German thickets ; and nine of the native German princes came spontaneously into his camp, subscribed such conditions as he thought fit to dictate, and complied with his requisitions of tribute in horses and provisions. This, however, is a delusive gleam of Roman energy, little corresponding with the true prevailing condition of the Roman power, and entirely due to the *personal* qualities of Probus. This prince himself put on record the sense which he entertained of the political prospects opening before them, by carrying a stone wall, of considerable height, from the Danube to the Neckar. Once this important gallery of land had been defended by human intrepidity ; now by brute Chinese arts of masonry. He

made various attempts also to effect a better distribution of barbarous tribes, by dislocating their settlements, and making extensive translations of their clans, according to the circumstances of those times. These arrangements, however, suggested often by short-sighted views, and carried into effect by mere violence, were sometimes defeated visibly at the time; and, doubtless, in very few cases accomplished the ends proposed. In one instance, where a party of Franks had been transported into the Asiatic province of Pontus, as a column of defence against the intrusive Alans, they, being determined to revisit their own country, swam the Hellespont, landed on the coasts of Asia Minor, of Greece, and Sicily, plundered Syracuse, steered for the Straits of Gibraltar, sailed along the shores of Spain and Gaul, passing finally through the English Channel and the German Ocean, right onwards to the Frisic and Batavian coasts, where they exultingly rejoined their exulting friends. Meantime, all the energy and military skill of Probus could not save him from the competition of various rivals. Indeed, it must then have been felt, as by us who look back on those times it is now felt, that, amidst so continued a series of brief reigns, violently interrupted by murders, scarcely any idea could arise answering to our modern ideas of treason and usurpation. For the ideas of fealty and of allegiance, as to an anointed monarch, could have no time to take root. Candidates for the purple must have been viewed rather as military rivals than as traitors to the reigning Cæsar. And hence one reason for the slight resistance which was often experienced by the seducers of armies. Probus, however, as accident in his case ordered it, subdued all his personal opponents—Saturninus in the East, Proculus and Bonoses in Gaul. For these victories he triumphed in the year 281. But his last hour was even

then at hand. One point of his military discipline, which he called back from elder days, was, to suffer no idleness in his camps. He it was who, by military labour, translated into Gaul and Hungary the Italian vine, to the great indignation of the Italian monopolist. The culture of vineyards, the laying of military roads, the draining of marshes, and similar labours, perpetually employed the hands of his stubborn and contumacious troops. On some work of this nature the army happened to be employed near Sirmium, and Probus was looking on from a tower, when a sudden frenzy of disobedience seized upon the men: a party of the mutineers ran up to the emperor, and with a hundred wounds laid him instantly dead. That they laid him dead, we do not at all doubt; but the how and the why remain as usual perfectly in the dark. The unmeaning tale serves only to remind us that in this, as in all other imperial murders, we are left without any vestige of a rational inquisition into the circumstances. Hardly one of these many murders has received any solution. The man was murdered: *that* we understand: it is all regular. But to tell us that a party of soldiers ran up to the top of a tower, and there murdered him, as though the altitude of the building, or its toilsome ascent, furnished a sort of key to an atrocity else inexplicable, is to insult us with sheer nonsense. We are told by some writers that the army was immediately seized with remorse for its own act; which, if truly reported, rather tends to confirm the image otherwise impressed upon us, of the relations between the army and Cæsar, as pretty closely corresponding with those between some fierce wild beast and its keeper; the keeper, if not uniformly vigilant as an Argus, is continually liable to fall a sacrifice to the wild instincts of the brute, mastering at intervals the reverence and fear under which it has

been habitually trained. In this case, both the murdering impulse and the remorse seem alike the effects of a brute instinct, and to have arisen under no guidance of rational purpose or reflection. The person who profited by this murder was Carus, the captain of the guard, a man of advanced years. He was proclaimed emperor by the army; and on this occasion there was no further reference to the Senate, than by a dry statement of the facts for its information. Troubling himself little about the approbation of a body not likely in any way to affect his purposes (which were purely martial, and adapted to the tumultuous state of the empire), Carus made immediate preparations for pursuing the Persian expedition,—so long promised and so often interrupted. Having provided for the security of the Illyrian frontier by a bloody victory over the Sarmatians, of whom we now hear for the first time, Carus advanced towards the Euphrates; and from the summit of a mountain he pointed the eyes of his eager army upon the rich provinces of the Persian empire. Varanes, the successor of Artaxerxes, vainly endeavoured to negotiate a peace. From some unknown cause, the Persian armies were not at this juncture disposable against Carus: it has been conjectured by some writers that they were engaged in an Indian war. Carus, it is certain, met with little resistance. He insisted on having the Roman supremacy acknowledged as a preliminary to any treaty; and having threatened to make Persia as bare as his own skull, which luckily, for the effect of his rhetoric, happened to be bald, he is supposed to have kept his word with regard to Mesopotamia. The great cities of Ctesiphon and Seleucia he took; and vast expectations were formed at Rome of the events which stood next in succession, when, on Christmas-day, 283, a sudden and mysterious end overtook Carus and his victorious advance.

We are all prepared of course for the customary murder, and the customary lie for disguising its incidents. The story transmitted to Rome was, that a great storm and a sudden darkness had surprised the camp of Carus; that the emperor, previously ill and reposing in his tent, was obscured from sight; that at length a cry had arisen, "The emperor is dead!" and that, at the same moment, the imperial tent had taken fire. The fire was traced to the confusion of his attendants; and this confusion was imputed by themselves to grief for their master's death. In all this it is easy to read pretty circumstantially a murder committed on the emperor by corrupted servants, and an attempt afterwards to conceal the traces of this murder by the ravages of fire. The report propagated through the army, and at that time received with credit, was, that Carus had been struck by lightning: and that omen, according to the Roman interpretation, implied a necessity of retiring from the expedition. So that apparently, the whole was a bloody *Roman* intrigue, set on foot for the purpose of baffling the emperor's resolution to prosecute the war; or else it was a *Persian* intrigue, buying off with money the army which they had no means or preparations for meeting on the field of battle. His son Numerian succeeded to the rank of emperor by the choice of the army. But the mysterious faction of murderers were still at work. After eight months' march from the Tigris to the Thracian Bosphorus, the army halted at Chalcedon. At this point of time a report arose suddenly, that the Emperor Numerian was dead. The impatience of the soldiery would brook no uncertainty: they rushed to the spot; satisfied themselves of the fact; and, loudly denouncing as the murderer Aper, the captain of the guard, committed him to custody, and assigned to Dioclesian, whom at the same time they invested with the supreme

power, the duty of investigating the case. Dioclesian acquitted himself of this task in a very summary way, by passing his sword through Aper before he could say a word in his defence. Let us all hope that the worthy captain *had* no defence, so that his having no time for words is an advantage on all sides : *least said*, observes the respectable old proverb, *is soonest mended*. As to mending, however, poor Numerian was far past it ; so a new Cæsar is wanted, the old one being cracked, and who better than Dioclesian. It seems that Dioclesian, having been promised the empire by a prophetess as soon as he should have killed a wild boar (Aper), was anxious to realize the omen. The whole proceeding has been taxed with injustice so manifest, as not even to seek a disguise. Meantime, it should be remembered that, *first*, Aper, as the captain of the guard, was answerable for the emperor's safety ; *secondly*, that his anxiety to profit by the emperor's murder was a sure sign that he had participated in that act ; and, *thirdly*, that the assent of the soldiery to the open and public act of Dioclesian, implies a conviction on their part of Aper's guilt. Here let us pause, having now arrived at the fourth and last group of the Cæsars, to notice the changes which had been wrought by time, co-operating with political events, in the very nature and constitution of the imperial office.

If it should unfortunately happen, that the palace of the Vatican, with its thirteen thousand* chambers, were to take fire, for a considerable space of time the fire would be retarded by the mere enormity of extent which it would

* "*Thirteen thousand chambers.*"—The number of the chambers in this prodigious palace is sometimes estimated at that amount. But Lady Miller, who made particular inquiries on this subject, supposed herself to have ascertained that the total amount, including cellars and closets capable of receiving a bed, was fifteen thousand.

have to traverse. But there would come at length a critical moment, at which the *maximum* of the retarding effect having been attained, the bulk and volume of the flaming mass would thenceforward assist the flames in the rapidity of their progress. Such was the effect upon the declension of the Roman empire from the vast extent of its territory. For a very long period that very extent, which finally became the overwhelming cause of its ruin, served to retard and to disguise it. A small encroachment, made at any one point upon the integrity of the empire, was neither much regarded at Rome, nor perhaps in and for itself much deserved to be regarded. But a very narrow belt of encroachments, made upon almost *every* part of so enormous a circumference, was sufficient of itself to compose something of an antagonist force. And to these external dilapidations, we must add the far more important dilapidations from within, affecting all the institutions of the State, and all the forces, whether moral or political, which had originally raised it or maintained it. Causes which had been latent in the public arrangements ever since the time of Augustus, and had been silently preying upon its vitals, had now reached a height which would no longer brook concealment. The fire which had smouldered through generations, had broken out at length into an open conflagration. Uproar and disorder, and the anarchy of a superannuated empire, strong only to punish and impotent to defend, were at this time convulsing the provinces in every point of the compass. Rome herself, the eternal city, had been menaced repeatedly; and a still more awful indication of the coming storm had been felt far to the south of Rome. One long wave of the great German deluge had stretched beyond the Pyrenees and the Pillars of Hercules, to the very homesteads of ancient Carthage. Victorious

banners were already floating on the margin of the Great Desert, and they were *not* the banners of Cæsar. Some vigorous hand was demanded at this moment, or else the funeral knell of Rome was on the point of sounding. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that, had the imbecile Carinus (the brother of Numerian) succeeded to the command of the Roman armies at this time, or any other leader than Dioclesian, the Empire of the West would have fallen to pieces within the next ten years.

Dioclesian was doubtless that man of iron whom the times demanded; and a foreign writer has gone so far as to class him *amongst* the greatest of men, if he were not even himself the greatest. But the position of Dioclesian was remarkable beyond all precedent, and was alone sufficient to prevent his being the greatest of men, by making it necessary that he should be the most selfish. For the case stood thus: If Rome were in danger, much more so was Cæsar. If the condition of the empire were such that hardly any energy or any foresight was adequate to its defence, for the emperor, on the other hand, there was scarcely a possibility that he should escape destruction. The chances were in an overbalance against the empire; but for the emperor, considered as the representative officer embodying the state, there was no chance at all. He shared in all the hazards of the empire; and had others so peculiarly pointed at himself, that his assassination was now become as much a matter of certain calculation, as seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, or any other periodic revolution of nature. The problem, therefore, for Dioclesian was a double one,—so to provide for the defence and maintenance of the empire, as simultaneously (and, if possible, through the very same institution) to provide for the personal security of Cæsar. This problem he solved, in some

imperfect degree, by the only expedient perhaps open to him in that despotism, and in those times. But it is remarkable, that, by the revolution which he effected, the office of Roman Imperator was completely altered, and Cæsar became henceforwards an Oriental Sultan or Padishah. Augustus, when moulding for his future purposes the form and constitution of that supremacy which he had obtained by inheritance and by arms, proceeded with so much caution and prudence, that even the style and title of his office was discussed in council as a matter of the first moment. The principle of his policy was to absorb into his own functions all those offices which conferred any real power to balance or to control his own. For this reason he appropriated the tribunitian power; because that was a popular and representative office, which, as occasions arose, would have given some opening to democratic influences. But the consular office he left untouched; because all its power was transferred to the imperator, by the entire command of the army, and by the new organization of the provincial governments.* And in all the rest of his arrange-

* In no point of his policy was the cunning or the sagacity of Augustus so much displayed, as in his treaty of partition with the Senate, which settled the distribution of the provinces, and their future administration. Seeming to take upon himself all the trouble and hazard, he did in effect appropriate all the power, and left to the Senate little more than trophies of show and ornament. As a first step, all the greater provinces, Spain and Gaul, were subdivided into many smaller ones. This done, Augustus proposed that the Senate should preside over the administration of those amongst them which were peaceably settled, and which paid a regular tribute; whilst all those which were the seats of danger, either as being exposed to hostile inroads, or to internal commotions,—all, therefore, in fact, *which could justify the keeping up of a military force*, he assigned to himself. In virtue of this arrangement, the Senate possessed in Africa those provinces which had been formed out of Carthage, Cyrene, and

ments, Augustus had proceeded on the principle of leaving as many openings to civic influences, and impressing upon all his institutions as much of the old Roman character as was compatible with the real and substantial supremacy established in the person of the emperor. Neither is it at all certain, as regarded even this aspect of the imperatorial office, that Augustus had the purpose, or so much as the wish, to annihilate all collateral power, and to invest the chief magistrate with absolute irresponsibility. For himself individually, as called upon to restore a shattered government, and out of the anarchy of civil wars to recombine the

the kingdom of Numidia; in Europe, the richest and most quiet part of Spain (*Hispania Bœtica*), with the large islands of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and Crete, and some districts of Greece; in Asia, the kingdoms of Pontus and Bithynia, with that part of Asia Minor technically called Asia; whilst, for his own share, Augustus retained Gaul, Syria, the chief part of Spain, and Egypt, the granary of Rome; finally, all the military posts on the Euphrates, on the Danube, or the Rhine.

Yet even the showy concessions here made to the Senate were defeated by another political institution, settled at the same time. It had been agreed that the governors of provinces should be appointed by the emperor and the Senate jointly. But within the senatorian jurisdiction, these governors, with the title of *Proconsuls*, were to have no military power whatsoever: and the appointments were good only for a single year Whereas, in the imperatorial provinces, where the governor bore the title of *Proprœtor*, there was provision made for a military establishment; and as to duration, the office was regulated entirely by the emperor's pleasure. One other ordinance, on the same head, riveted the vassalage of the Senate. Hitherto, a great source of the Senate's power had been found in the uncontrolled management of the provincial revenues; but, at this time, Augustus so arranged that branch of the administration, that, throughout the senatorian or proconsular provinces, all taxes were immediately paid into the *ærarium*, or treasury of the state; whilst the whole revenues of the proprætorian (or imperatorial) provinces, from this time forward, flowed into the *fiscus*, or private treasure of the individual emperor.

elements of power into some shape better fitted for duration (and, by consequence, for insuring peace and protection to the world) than the extinct republic, it might be reasonable to seek such an irresponsibility. But, as regarded his successors, considering the great pains he took to discourage all manifestations of princely arrogance, and to develop by education and example the civic virtues of patriotism and affability in their whole bearing towards the people of Rome, there is reason to presume that he wished to remove them from popular control, without, therefore, removing them from popular influence.

Hence it was, and from this original precedent of Augustus, aided by the constitution which he had given to the office of imperator, that up to the era of Dioclesian, no prince had dared utterly to neglect the Senate, or the people of Rome. He might hate the Senate, like Severus, or Aurelian ; he might even meditate their extermination, like the brutal Maximin. But this arose from any cause rather than from contempt. He hated them precisely because he feared them, or because he paid them an involuntary tribute of superstitious reverence, or because the malice of a tyrant interpreted into a sort of treason the rival influence of the Senate over the minds of men. But, before Dioclesian, the undervaluing of the Senate, or the harshest treatment of that body, had arisen from views which were *personal* to the individual Cæsar. It was now made to arise from the very constitution of the office, and the mode of the appointment. To defend the empire, it was the opinion of Dioclesian that a single emperor was not sufficient. And it struck him, at the same time, that by the very institution of a plurality of emperors, which was now destined to secure the integrity of the empire, ample provision might be made for the personal security of each emperor. He carried his plan into immediate exe-

cution, by appointing an associate to his own rank of Augustus in the person of Maximian—an experienced general; whilst each of them in effect multiplied his own office still farther by severally appointing a Cæsar, or hereditary prince. And thus the very same partition of the public authority, by means of a duality of emperors, to which the Senate had often resorted of late, as the best means of restoring their own republican aristocracy, was now adopted by Dioclesian as the simplest engine for overthrowing finally the power of either Senate or army to interfere with the elective privilege. This he endeavoured to centre in the existing emperors; and, at the same moment, to discourage treason or usurpation generally, whether in the party choosing or the party chosen, by securing to each emperor, in the case of his own assassination, an avenger in the person of his surviving associate, as also in the persons of the two Cæsars, or adopted heirs and lieutenants. The associate emperor, Maximian, together with the two Cæsars —Galerius appointed by himself, and Constantius Chlorus by Maximian—were all bound to himself by ties of gratitude; all owing their stations ultimately to his own favour. And these ties he endeavoured to strengthen by other ties of affinity; each of the Augusti having given his daughter in marriage to his own adopted Cæsar. And thus it seemed scarcely possible that a usurpation should be successful against so firm a league of friends and relatives.

The direct purposes of Dioclesian were but imperfectly attained; the internal peace of the empire lasted only during his own reign; and with his abdication of the empire commenced the bloodiest civil wars which had desolated the world since the contests of the great triumvirate. But the collateral blow, which he meditated against the authority of the Senate, was entirely successful. Never again had the

Senate any real influence on the fate of the world. And with the power of the Senate expired concurrently the weight and influence of Rome. Dioclesian is supposed never to have seen Rome, except on the single occasion when he entered it for the ceremonial purpose of a triumph. Even for that purpose it ceased to be a city of resort; for Dioclesian's was the final triumph. And, lastly, even as the chief city of the empire for business or for pleasure, it ceased to claim the homage of mankind; the Cæsar was already born whose destiny it was to cashier the metropolis of the world, and to appoint her overshadowing substitute. This also may be regarded in effect as the ordinance of Dioclesian; for he, by his long residence at Nicomedia, expressed his opinion pretty plainly, that Rome was not central enough to perform the functions of a capital to so vast an empire; that this was one cause of the declension now become so visible in the forces of the State; and that some city, not very far from the Hellespont or the Ægean Sea, would be a capital better adapted by position to the exigencies of the times.

But the revolutions effected by Dioclesian did not stop here. The simplicity of its republican origin had so far affected the external character and *entourage* of the imperial office, that in the midst of luxury the most unbounded, and spite of all other corruptions, a majestic plainness of manners, deportment, and dress, had still continued from generation to generation, characteristic of the Roman imperator in his intercourse with his subjects. All this was now changed; and for the Roman was substituted the Persian dress, the Persian style of household, a Persian court, and Persian manners. A diadem, or tiara beset with pearls, now encircled the temples of the Roman Augustus; his sandals were studded with pearls, as in the Persian court;

and the other parts of his dress were in harmany with these. The prince was instructed no longer to make himself familiar to the eyes of men. He sequestered himself from his subjects in the recesses of his palace. None, who sought him, could any longer gain easy admission to his presence. It was a point of his new duties to be difficult of access; and they who were at length admitted to an audience, found him surrounded by eunuchs, and were expected to make their approaches by genuflexions, by servile "adorations," and by real acts of worship as to a visible god.

It is strange that a ritual of court ceremonies, so elaborate and artificial as this, should first have been introduced by a soldier, and a warlike soldier like Dioclesian. This, however, is in part explained by his education and long residence in Eastern countries. But the same eastern training fell to the lot of Constantine, who was in effect his successor;* and

* On the abdication of Dioclesian and of Maximian, Galerius and Constantius succeeded as the new Augusti The terms of that original family compact, under which either of the two had any rights at all, were, doubtless, drawn up with precision enough for honest men. But, interpreted by ambitious knaves, no treaty that ever swindler dictated, or hair-splitting lawyer improved by interlineations, but is found to be sown with ambiguities as thickly as the heavens are sown with stars. Drive a coach-and-six through it! why, ten legions could find a broad ingress through page 1. Galerius, as the more immediate representative of Dioclesian, thought himself entitled to appoint both Cæsars,—the Daza (Maximus) in Syria, Severus in Italy. Meantime, Constantine, the son of Constantius, with difficulty obtaining permission from Galerius, paid a visit to his father, upon whose death, which followed soon after, Constantine came forward as a Cæsar, under the appointment of his father. To this with a bad grace Galerius submitted; but immediately, by way of retaliating counterpoise, Maxentius, a reputed son of Maximian, was roused by emulation with Constantine to assume the purple; and being joined by his father, they jointly attacked and destroyed Severus. Galerius, to revenge the death of his own Cæsar, advanced towards

the Oriental tone and standard established by these two emperors, though disturbed a little by the plain and military bearing of Julian, and one or two more emperors of the same breeding, finally re-established itself with undisputed sway in the court when finally it became Byzantine.

Meantime, the institutions of Dioclesian, if they had destroyed Rome and the Senate as influences upon the course of public affairs, and if they had destroyed the Roman features of the Cæsars, do, notwithstanding, appear to have attained one of their purposes, in limiting the extent of imperial murders. Travelling through the brief list of the remaining Cæsars, we perceive a little more security for life; and hence, the successions are less rapid. Constantine, who (like Aaron's rod) had swallowed up all his competitors *seriatim*, left the empire to his three sons: and the last of these most unwillingly to Julian. That prince's Persian expedition, so much resembling in rashness and presumption the Russian campaign of Napoleon, though so much below it in the scale of its tragic results, led to the short reign of Jovian (or Jovinian), which lasted only seven months. Upon his death succeeded the house of Valentinian,* in whose descendant, of the third generation, the

Rome; but being compelled to a disastrous retreat, he resorted to the measure of associating another emperor with himself, as a balance to his new enemies. This was Licinius; and thus, at one time, there were six emperors in the field, either as Augusti or (with a mere *titular* inferiority of rank) as Cæsars. Galerius dying, however, all the rest were in succession destroyed by Constantine.

* Valentinian the First, who admitted his brother Valens to a partnership in the empire, had, by his first wife, an elder son, Gratian, who reigned and associated with himself Theodosius, commonly called the Great. By his second wife this First Valentinian had Valentinian the Second, who, upon the death of his brother Gratian, was allowed to share the empire by Theodosius. Theodosius, by his first wife, had two sons—Arcadius, who afterwards reigned as the eastern or

empire, properly speaking, expired : for the seven shadows who succeeded, from Avitus and Majorian to Julius Nepos and Romulus Augustulus, were in no proper sense Roman emperors—they were not even Emperors of the West—but had a limited kingdom in the Italian peninsula. Valentinian the Third was, in any adequate sense, the last emperor of the West.

But, in a fuller and ampler sense, recurring to what we have said of Dioclesian and the tenor of his great revolution, we may affirm that Probus and Carus were the final representatives of the majesty of Rome; for they reigned over the whole empire, not yet incapable of sustaining its own unity; and in them were still preserved, not yet obliterated by oriental effeminacy, those majestic features which reflected republican consuls, and through them, the Senate and people of Rome. That, which had offended Dioclesian in the condition of the Roman emperors, was the grandest feature of their dignity. It is true that the peril of the office had become intolerable; each Cæsar submitted to his sad inauguration with a certainty, liable even to hardly any disguise from the delusions of youthful hope, that for him, within the boundless empire which he governed, there was

Byzantine emperor, and Honorius, whose western reign was so much illustrated by Stilicho, and glorified by the poet Claudian in the farewell music of the Roman harp. By a second wife, daughter to Valentinian the First, Theodosius had a daughter (half sister, therefore, to Honorius), whose son was Valentinian the Third; and through this alliance it was that the two last emperors of conspicuous mark united their two houses, and entwined their separate ciphers, so that more gracefully, and with the commensurate grandeur of a double-headed eagle looking east and west to the rising, but also, alas! to the *setting* sun, the brother Cæsars might take leave of the children of Romulus in the pathetic but lofty words of the departing gladiators, *Morituri*, we that are now to die, *vos salutamus*, make our farewell salutation to you!

no coast of safety, no shelter from the storm, no retreat, except the grave, from the dagger of the assassin. Gibbon has described the hopeless condition of one who should attempt to fly from the wrath of the almost omnipresent imperator. But this dire impossibility of escape was in the end dreadfully retaliated upon that imperator; persecutors and traitors were found everywhere: and the vindictive or the ambitious subject found himself as omnipresent as the jealous or the offended emperor. There was no escape open, says Gibbon, *from* Cæsar: true; but neither was there any escape *for* Cæsar. The crown of the Cæsars was therefore a crown of thorns; and it must be admitted, that never in this world have rank and power been purchased at so awful a cost in tranquillity and peace of mind. The steps of Cæsar's throne were absolutely saturated with the blood of those who had possessed it: and so inexorable was that murderous fate which overhung that gloomy eminence, that at length it demanded the spirit of martyrdom in him who ventured to ascend it. In these circumstances, some change was imperatively demanded. Human nature was no longer equal to the terrors which it was summoned to face. But the changes of Dioclesian transmuted that golden sceptre into a base oriental alloy. They left nothing behind of what had so much challenged the veneration of man: for it was in the union of republican simplicity with the irresponsibility of illimitable power; it was in the antagonism between the merely human and approachable condition of Cæsar as a man, and his divine supremacy as a potentate and king of kings—that the secret lay of his unrivalled grandeur. This perished utterly under the reforming hands of Dioclesian. Cæsar only it was that could be permitted to extinguish Cæsar: and a Roman imperator it was who, by remodelling, did in effect abolish,—by exorcising from its foul terrors, did in

effect disenchant of its sanctity, that imperatorial dignity, which having once perished, could have no second existence, and which was undoubtedly the sublimest incarnation of power, and a monument the mightiest of greatness built by human hands, which upon this planet has been suffered to appear.

THE THEBAN SPHINX.

THE most ancient* story in the Pagan records, older by two generations than the story of Troy, is that of Œdipus and his mysterious fate, which wrapt in ruin both himself and all his kindred. No story whatever continued so long to impress the Greek sensibilities with religious awe, or was felt by the great tragic poets to be so supremely fitted for scenical representation. In one of its stages, this story is clothed with the majesty of darkness; in another stage, it is radiant with burning lights of female love, the most faithful and heroic, offering a beautiful relief to the preternatural malice dividing the two sons of Œdipus. This malice was so intense, that when the corpses of both brothers were burned together on the same funeral pyre (as by one tradition they were), the flames from each parted asunder,

* That is, amongst stories not wearing a *mythologic* character, such as those of Prometheus, Hercules, &c. The era of Troy and its siege is doubtless by some centuries older than its usual chronologic date of nine centuries before Christ. And considering the mature age of Eteocles and Polynices, the two sons of Œdipus, at the period of the "*Seven against Thebes*," which seven were contemporary with the *fathers* of the heroes engaged in the Trojan war, it becomes necessary to add sixty or seventy years to the Trojan date, in order to obtain that of Œdipus and the Sphinx. Out of the Hebrew Scriptures, there is nothing purely historic so old as this.

and refused to mingle. This female love was so intense that it survived the death of its object, cared not for human praise or blame, and laughed at the grave which waited in the rear for itself, yawning visibly for immediate retribution. There are four separate movements through which this impassioned tale devolves ; all are of commanding interest, and all wear a character of portentous solemnity, which fits them for harmonizing with the dusky shadows of that deep antiquity into which they ascend.

One only feature there is in the story, and this belongs to its second stage (which is also its sublimest stage), where a pure taste is likely to pause, and to revolt from something not perfectly reconciled with the general depth of the colouring. This lies in the Sphinx's riddle, which, as hitherto explained, seems to us deplorably below the grandeur of the occasion. Three thousand years, at the least, have passed away since that riddle was propounded ; and it seems odd enough that the proper solution should not present itself till November of 1849. That is true ; it seems odd, but still it is possible, that we, in *anno domini* 1849, may see further through a mile-stone than Œdipus, the king, in the year B. C. twelve or thirteen hundred. The long interval between the enigma and its answer, may remind the reader of an old story in Joe Miller, where a traveller, apparently an inquisitive person, in passing through a toll-bar, said to the keeper, "How do you like your eggs dressed?" Without waiting for the answer, he rode off; but twenty-five years later, riding through the same bar, kept by the same man, the traveller looked steadfastly at him, and received the monosyllabic answer, "*Poached.*" A long parenthesis is twenty-five years ; and we, gazing back over a far wider gulf of time, shall endeavour to look hard at the Sphinx, and to convince that mysterious young

lady—if our voice can reach her—that she was too easily satisfied with the answer given; that the true answer is yet to come; and that, in fact, Œdipus shouted before he was out of the wood.

But, first of all, let us rehearse the circumstances of this old Grecian story. For in a popular journal it is always a duty to assume, that perhaps three readers out of four may have had no opportunity, by the course of their education, for making themselves acquainted with classical legends. And in this present case, besides the indispensableness of the story to the proper comprehension of our own improved answer to the Sphinx, the story has a separate and independent value of its own; for it illustrates a profound but obscure idea of pagan ages, which is connected with the elementary glimpses of man into the abysses of his higher relations, and lurks mysteriously amongst what Milton so finely calls "the dark foundations" of our human nature. This notion, it is hard to express in modern phrase, for we have no idea exactly corresponding to it; but in Latin it was called *piacularity*. The reader must understand upon our authority, *nostro periculo*, and in defiance of all the false translations spread through books, that the ancients (meaning the Greeks and Romans before the time of Christianity) had no idea, not by the faintest vestige, of what in the scriptural system is called *sin*. The Latin word *peccatum*, the Greek word *amartia*, are translated continually by the word *sin*: but neither one word nor the other has any such meaning in writers belonging to the pure classical period. When baptized into new meanings through their adoption by Christianity, these words, in common with many others, transmigrated into new and philosophic functions. But originally they tended towards no such acceptations, nor *could* have done so; see-

ing that the ancients had no avenue opened to them through which the profound idea of *sin* would have been even dimly intelligible. Plato, 400 years before Christ, or Cicero, more than 300 years later, was fully equal to the idea of *guilt* through all its gamut; but no more equal to the idea of *sin*, than a sagacious hound to the idea of gravitation, or of central forces. It is the tremendous postulate upon which this idea reposes, that constitutes the initial moment of that revelation which is common to Judaism and to Christianity. We have no intention of wandering into any discussion upon this question. It will suffice for the service of the occasion if we say, that guilt, in all its modifications, implies only a defect or a wound in the individual. Sin, on the other hand, the most mysterious, and the most sorrowful of all ideas, implies a taint not in the individual but in the race —*that* is the distinction; or a taint in the individual, not through any local disease of his own, but through a scrofula equally diffused through the infinite family of man. We are not speaking controversially, either as teachers of theology or of philosophy; and we are careless of the particular construction by which the reader interprets to himself this profound idea. What we affirm is, that this idea was utterly and exquisitely inappreciable by Pagan Greece and Rome; that various translations from Pindar,* from Aris-

* And when we are speaking of this subject, it may be proper to mention (as the very extreme anachronism which the case admits of), that Mr. Archdeacon W. has absolutely introduced the idea of sin into the *Iliad;* and, in a regular octavo volume, has represented it as the key to the whole movement of the fable. It was once made a reproach to Southey, that his Don Roderick spoke, in his penitential moods, a language too much resembling that of Methodism: yet, after all, that prince was a Christian, and a Christian amongst Mussulmans. But what are we to think of Achilles and Ajax, when described as being (or *not* being) "under convictions of sin."

tophanes, and from the Greek tragedians, embodying at intervals this word *sin*, are more extravagant than would be the word *category*, or the *synthetic unity of consciousness*, introduced into the harangue of an Indian sachem amongst the Cherokees; and finally, that the very nearest approach to the abysmal idea which we Christians attach to the word sin (an approach, but to that which never can be touched; a writing as of palmistry upon each man's hand, but a writing which "no man can read"), lies in the pagan idea of *piacularity*; which is an idea thus far like hereditary sin, that it expresses an evil to which the party affected has not consciously concurred; which is thus far *not* like hereditary sin, that it expresses an evil personal to the individual, and not extending itself to the race.

This was the evil exemplified in Œdipus. He was loaded with an insupportable burthen of pariah participation in pollution and misery, to which his will had never consented. He seemed to have committed the most atrocious crimes; he was a murderer, he was a parricide, he was persistently incestuous, and yet how? In the case where he might be thought a murderer, he had stood upon his self-defence, not benefiting by any superior resources, but, on the contrary, fighting as one man against three, and under the provocation of insufferable insolence. Had he been a parricide? What matter, as regarded the moral guilt, if his father (and by the fault of that father) were utterly unknown to him? Incestuous had he been? but how, if the very oracles of fate, as expounded by events, and by mysterious creatures such as the Sphinx, had stranded him like a ship left by the tide, upon this dark unknown shore of a criminality unsuspected by himself? All these treasons against the sanctities of nature had Œdipus committed; and yet was this Œdipus a thoroughly good man, no more dreaming of the

horrors in which he was entangled, than the eye at noon-day in midsummer is conscious of the stars that lie far behind the day-light. Let us review rapidly the incidents of his life.

Laius, king of Thebes, the descendant of Labdacus, and representing the illustrious house of the Labdacidæ, about the time when his wife, Jocasta, promised to present him with a child, had learned from various prophetic voices that this unborn child was destined to be his murderer. It is singular that in all such cases, which are many, spread through classical literature, the parties menaced by fate believe the menace, else why do they seek to evade it; and yet believe it not, else why do they fancy themselves able to evade it? This fatal child, who was the Œdipus of tragedy, being at length born, Laius committed the infant to a slave, with orders to expose it on Mount Cithæron. This was done; the infant was suspended, by thongs running through the fleshy parts of his feet, to the branches of a tree, and he was supposed to have perished by wild beasts. But a shepherd, who found him in this perishing state, pitied his helplessness, and carried him to his master and mistress, king and queen of Corinth, who adopted and educated him as their own child. That he was *not* their own child, and that in fact he was a foundling of unknown parentage, Œdipus was not slow of finding from the taunts of his schoolfellows; and at length, with the determination of learning his origin and his fate, being now a full-grown young man, he strode off from Corinth to Delphi. The oracle at Delphi, being as usual in collusion with his evil destiny, sent him off to seek his parents at Thebes. On his journey thither, he met, in a narrow part of the road, a chariot proceeding in the counter direction from Thebes to Delphi. The charioteer relying upon the grandeur of his master, insolently ordered the young stranger to clear the

road ; upon which, under the impulse of his youthful blood, Œdipus slew him on the spot. The haughty grandee who occupied the chariot rose up in fury to avenge this outrage, fought with the young stranger, and was himself killed. One attendant upon the chariot remained ; but he, warned by the fate of his master and his fellow-servant, withdrew quietly into the forest that skirted the road, revealing no word of what had happened, but reserved by the dark destiny of Œdipus to that evil day on which *his* evidence, concurring with other circumstantial exposures, should convict the young Corinthian emigrant of parricide. For the present, Œdipus viewed himself as no criminal, but much rather as an injured man, who had simply used his natural powers of self-defence against an insolent aggressor. This aggressor, as the reader will suppose, was Laius. The throne therefore was empty on the arrival of Œdipus in Thebes : the king's death was known indeed, but not the mode of it ; and that Œdipus was the murderer, could not reasonably be suspected either by the people of Thebes, or by Œdipus himself. The whole affair would have had no interest for the young stranger, but through the accident of a public calamity then desolating the land. A mysterious monster, called the Sphinx, half woman and half brute, was at that time on the coast of Bœotia, and levying a daily tribute of human lives from the Bœotian territory. This tribute, it was understood, would continue to be levied from the territories attached to Thebes, until a riddle proposed by the monster should have been satisfactorily solved. By way of encouragement to all who might feel prompted to undertake so dangerous an adventure, the authorities of Thebes offered the throne and the hand of the widowed Jocasta as the prize of success ; and Œdipus, either on public or on selfish motives, entered the lists as a competitor.

The riddle proposed by the Sphinx, ran in these terms: "What creature is that which moves on four feet in the morning, on two feet at noon-day, and on three towards the going down of the sun?" Œdipus, after some consideration, answered, that the creature was MAN, who creeps on the ground with hands and feet when an infant, walks upright in the vigour of manhood, and leans upon a staff in old age. Immediately the dreadful Sphinx confessed the truth of his solution by throwing herself headlong from a point of rock into the sea; her power being overthrown as soon as her secret had been detected. Thus was the Sphinx destroyed; and, according to the promise of the proclamation, for this great service to the state, Œdipus was immediately recompensed. He was saluted King of Thebes, and married to the royal widow Jocasta. In this way it happened, but without suspicion either in himself or others pointing to the truth, that Œdipus had slain his father, had ascended his father's throne, and had married his own mother.

Through a course of years all these dreadful events lay hushed in darkness; but at length a pestilence arose, and an embassy was despatched to Delphi, in order to ascertain the cause of the heavenly wrath, and the proper means of propitiating that wrath. The embassy returned to Thebes armed with a knowledge of the fatal secrets connected with Œdipus, but under some restraints of prudence in making a publication of what so dreadfully affected the most powerful personage in the state. Perhaps in the whole history of human art as applied to the evolution of a poetic fable, there is nothing more exquisite than the management of this crisis by Sophocles. A natural discovery, first of all, connects Œdipus with the death of Laius. That discovery comes upon him with some surprise, but with no shock of fear or remorse. That he had killed a man of rank in a

sudden quarrel, he had always known; that this man was now discovered to be Laius, added nothing to the reasons for regret. The affair remained as it was. It was simply a case of personal strife on the highroad, and one which had really grown out of aristocratic violence in the adverse party. Œdipus had asserted his own rights and dignity only as all brave men would have done in an age that knew nothing of civic police.

It was true that this first discovery—the identification of himself as the slayer of Laius—drew after it two others, viz., that it was the throne of his victim on which he had seated himself, and that it was *his* widow whom he had married. But these were no offences; and, on the contrary, they were distinctions won at great risk to himself, and by a great service to the country. Suddenly, however, the re-appearance and disclosures of the shepherd who had saved his life during infancy, in one moment threw a dazzling but funereal light upon the previous discoveries that else had seemed so trivial. In an instant everything was read in another sense. The death of Laius, the marriage with his widow, the appropriation of his throne, the incest with his mother, which had called into life four children (two daughters, Ismene and Antigone; with two fierce rival sons, Eteocles and Polynices), all towered into colossal crimes, illimitable, and opening no avenues to atonement: Œdipus, in the agonies of his horror, inflicts blindness upon himself; Jocasta commits suicide; the two sons fall into fiery feuds for the assertion of their separate claims on the throne, but previously unite for the expulsion of Œdipus, as one who had become a curse to Thebes. And thus the poor heart-shattered king would have been turned out upon the public roads, aged, blind, and a helpless vagrant, but for the sublime piety of his two daughters, but especially

of Antigone the elder. They share with their unhappy father the hardships and perils of the road, and do not leave him until the moment of his mysterious summons to some ineffable death in the woods of Colonus, not far from Athens. The expulsion of Polynices, the younger son, from Thebes; his return with a confederate band of princes for the recovery of his rights; the death of the two brothers in single combat; the public prohibition of funeral rites to Polynices, as one who had levied war against his native land; and the final reappearance of Antigone, who defies the law, and secures a grave to her brother at the certain price of a grave to herself,—these are the sequels and arrears of the family overthrow accomplished through the dark destiny of Œdipus.

And now, having reviewed the incidents of the story, in what respect is it that we object to the solution of the Sphinx's riddle? We do not object to it as *a* solution of the riddle, and the only one possible at the moment. It is really *a* solution; and for the moment a satisfactory solution; but what we contend is, that it is not *the* solution. All great prophecies, all great mysteries, are likely to involve double, triple, or even quadruple interpretations; each rising in dignity, each cryptically involving another. Even amongst natural agencies, precisely as they rise in grandeur, they multiply their final purposes. Rivers and seas, for instance, are useful, not merely as means of separating nations from each other, but also as means of uniting them; not merely as baths, and for all purposes of washing and cleansing, but also as reservoirs of fish, as high-roads for the conveyance of commodities, as permanent sources of agricultural fertility, &c. In like manner, a mystery of any sort, having a public reference, may be presumed to couch within it a secondary and a profounder

interpretation. The reader may think that the Sphinx ought to have understood her own riddle best; and that, if *she* were satisfied with the answer of Œdipus, it must be impertinent in us at this time of day to censure it. To censure, indeed, is more than we propose. The solution of Œdipus was a true one; and it was all that he *could* have given in that early period of his life. But perhaps at the moment of his death amongst the gloomy thickets of Attica, he might have been able to suggest another and a better. If not, then we have the satisfaction of thinking ourselves somewhat less dense than Œdipus. The slave in Terence, viz., Davus, though otherwise a clever fellow, when puzzled by a secret, or (as in America they say) *teetotaciously exflunctificated*, excuses himself by saying—"Davus sum, non Œdipus;" but we make no such excuse. We hold ourselves a cut above Œdipus and the Sphinx together. Exflunctificated we certainly were: but not teetotaciously; for a few years' meditation whispered to us that revelation, that second vision of truth which not Davus, nor even Œdipus, in moments when it might have saved him, could guess; for, in our opinion, the full and *final* answer to the Sphinx's riddle lay in the word ŒDIPUS. Œdipus himself it was that fulfilled the conditions of the enigma. He it was, in the most pathetic sense, that went upon four feet when an infant; for the general condition of helplessness attached to all mankind in the period of infancy, and which is expressed symbolically by this image of creeping, applied to Œdipus in a far more significant manner, as one abandoned by all his natural protectors, thrown upon the chances of a wilderness, and upon the mercies of a slave. The allusion to this general helplessness had besides a special propriety in the case of Œdipus, who drew his very name (viz., *Swollen foot*) from the injury done to his infant feet. He

again it was that, in a more emphatic sense than usual, asserted that majestic self-sufficingness and independence of all alien aid, which is typified by the act of walking upright at noonday upon his own natural basis. Throwing off all the power and splendour borrowed from his royal protectors at Corinth, trusting exclusively to his native powers as a man, he had fought his way through insult and outrage to the presence of the dreadful Sphinx; her he had confounded and vanquished; he had leaped into a throne, the throne of him who had insulted him, without other resources than such as he drew from himself; and he had in the same way obtained a royal bride. With good right, therefore, he was foreshadowed in the riddle as one who walked upright by his own masculine vigour, and relied upon no gifts but those of nature. Lastly, by a sad but a pitying image, Œdipus is described as supporting himself at nightfall on three feet; for Œdipus it was that by his cruel sons would have been rejected from Thebes with no auxiliary means of motion or support beyond his own languishing powers; blind and broken-hearted, he must have wandered into snares and ruin, his own feet must have been supplanted immediately, but then came to his aid another foot, the holy Antigone. She it was that guided and cheered him, when all the world had forsaken him; she it was that already, in the vision of the cruel Sphinx, had been prefigured dimly as the staff upon which Œdipus should lean, as the *third* foot that should support his steps when the deep shadows of his sunset were gathering and settling about his grave.

In this way we obtain a solution of the Sphinx's riddle more commensurate and symmetrical with the other features of the story, which are all clothed with the grandeur of mystery. The Sphinx herself is a mystery. Whence

came her monstrous nature, that so often renewed its remembrance amongst men of distant lands, in Egyptian or Ethiopian marble? Whence came her wrath against Thebes? This wrath, how durst it tower so high as to measure itself against the enmity of a nation? This wrath, how came it to sink so low as to collapse at the echo of a word from a friendless stranger? Mysterious again is the blind collusion of this unhappy stranger with the dark decrees of fate. The very misfortunes of his infancy had given into his hands one chance more for escape: these misfortunes had transferred him to Corinth, and staying *there* he was safe. But the headstrong haughtiness of youthful blood causes him to recoil unknowingly upon the one sole spot of all the earth where the co-efficients for ratifying his destruction are all lying in ambush. Heaven and earth are silent for a generation; one might fancy that they are *treacherously* silent, in order that Œdipus may have time for building up to the clouds the pyramid of his mysterious offences. His four children, incestuously born—sons that are his brothers, daughters that are his sisters—have grown up to be men and women, before the first mutterings are becoming audible of that great tide slowly coming up from the sea, which is to sweep away himself and the foundations of his house. Heaven and earth must now bear joint witness against him. Heaven speaks first: the pestilence that walketh in darkness is made the earliest minister of the discovery—the pestilence it is, scourging the seven-gated Thebes, as very soon the Sphinx also will scourge her, that is appointed to usher in, like some great ceremonial herald, that sad drama of Nemesis; that vast procession of revelation and retribution which the earth, and the graves of the earth, must finish. Mysterious also is the pomp of ruin with which this revelation of the past descends upon

that ancient house of Thebes. Like a shell from modern artillery, it leaves no time for prayer or evasion, but shatters by the same explosion all that stand within its circle of fury. Every member of that devoted household, as if they had been sitting not around a sacred domestic hearth, but around the crater of some surging volcano—all alike, father and mother, sons and daughters, are wrapt at once in fiery whirlwinds of ruin. And amidst this general agony of destroying wrath, one central mystery, as a darkness within a darkness, withdraws itself into a secrecy unapproachable by eyesight, or by filial love, or by guesses of the brain—and *that* is the death of Œdipus. *Did* he die? Even *that* is more than we can say. How dreadful does the sound fall upon the heart of some poor, horror-stricken criminal, pirate or murderer, that has offended by a mere human offence, when, at nightfall, tempted by the sweet spectacle of a peaceful hearth, he creeps stealthily into some village inn, and hopes for one night's respite from his terror, but suddenly feels the touch and hears the voice of the stern officer saying, "Sir, you are wanted." Yet that summons is but too intelligible: it shocks, but it bewilders not; and the utmost of its malice is bounded by the scaffold. "Deep," says the unhappy man, "is the downward path of anguish which I am called to tread; but it has been trodden by others." For Œdipus there was no such comfort. What language of earth or trumpet of heaven could decipher the woe of that unfathomable call, when, from the depth of ancient woods, a voice that drew like gravitation, that sucked in like a vortex, far off yet near, in some distant world, yet close at hand, cried, "Hark, Œdipus! King Œdipus! come hither! thou art wanted!" *Wanted!* for what? Was it for death? was it for judgment? was it for some wilderness of pariah eternities? No man ever knew.

Chasms opened in the earth; dark gigantic arms stretched out to receive the king; clouds and vapour settled over the penal abyss; and of him only, though the neighbourhood of his disappearance was known, no trace or visible record survived, neither bones, nor grave, nor dust, nor epitaph.

Did the Sphinx follow with her cruel eye this fatal tissue of calamity to its shadowy crisis at Colonus? As the billows closed over her head, did she perhaps attempt to sting with her dying words? Did she say, "I, the daughter of mystery, am *called;* I am *wanted.* But, amidst the uproar of the sea, and the clangour of sea-birds, high over all I hear another though a distant summons. I can hear that thou, Œdipus, son of mystery, art *called* from afar; thou also wilt be *wanted.*" Did the wicked Sphinx labour in vain, amidst her parting convulsions, to breathe this freezing whisper into the heart of him that had overthrown her?

Who can say? Both of these enemies were pariah mysteries, and may have faced each other again, with blazing malice in some pariah world. But all things in this dreadful story ought to be harmonized. Already in itself it is an ennobling and an idealizing of the riddle, that it is made a double riddle; that it contains an exoteric sense obvious to all the world, but also an esoteric sense—now suggested conjecturally after thousands of years—*possibly* unknown to the Sphinx, and *certainly* unknown to Œdipus; that this second riddle is hid within the first; that the one riddle is the secret commentary upon the other; and that the earliest is the hieroglyphic of the last. Thus far as regards the riddle itself; and, as regards Œdipus in particular, it exalts the mystery around

him, that in reading this riddle, and in tracing the vicissitudes from infancy to old age, attached to the general destiny of his race, unconsciously he was tracing the dreadful vicissitudes attached specially and separately to his own.

THE ESSENES.

No scholar—not even the wariest—has ever read with adequate care those records which we still possess, of primitive Christianity. He should approach this subject with a vexatious scrutiny. He should lie in ambush for discoveries, as we did in reading Josephus.

Let us examine his chapter on the Essenes, and open the very logic of the case, its very outermost outline, in these two sentences: A thing there *is* in Josephus, which ought not to be there; this thing we will call *Epsilon* (E). A thing there is which ought to be in Josephus, but which is not; this thing we propose to call *Chi* (X).

The *Epsilon*, which ought not to be there, but *is*—what is that? It is the pretended philosophical sect amongst the Jews, to which Josephus gives the name of *Essenes*; this ought not to be in Josephus, nor anywhere else, for certain we are that no such sect ever existed.

The *Chi*, which ought by every obligation—obligations of reason, passion, interest—to have been more broadly and emphatically present in the Judæan history of the Josephan period than in any other period whatever, but unaccountably is omitted—what is that? It is, reader, neither more nor less than the new-born brotherhood of *Christians*. The whole monstrosity of this omission will not be apparent to the reader, until his attention be pointed closely to the chronological position of Josephus; his longitude as respects the great meridian of the Christian era.

The period of Josephus' connexion with Palestine, running abreast (as it were) with that very generation succeeding to Christ—with that very Epichristian age, prolonging the generation of Christ, which dated from the crucifixion, and terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem—how? by what possibility? did he escape all knowledge of the Christians as a body of men that should naturally have challenged notice from the very stocks and stones of their birthplace; the very echo of whose footsteps ought to have sunk upon the ear with the awe that belongs to spiritual phenomena, that belongs to the bells of convents in the Desert long since dilapidated, and surviving only in the traditions of Bedouins, that belongs (in the sublime expression of Wordsworth) to "echoes from beyond the grave." There were circumstances of distinction in the very closeness of the confederation that connected the early Christians, which ought to have made them interesting. But, waiving all that, what a supernatural awe must naturally have attended the persons of those who laid the corner-stone of their faith in an event so affecting and so appalling as the Resurrection! The *Chi*, therefore, that should be in Josephus, but that is not, how can we suggest any approximation to a solution of this mystery?

True it is, that an interpolated passage, found in all the printed editions of Josephus, makes him take a special and a respectful notice of Jesus Christ. But the passage has long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatic.

True it is, that Whiston makes the astounding discovery that Josephus was himself an Ebionite Christian. Josephus a Christian! In the instance before us, were it possible that he had been a Christian, in that case the wonder is many times greater, that he should have omitted all notice of the whole body as a fraternity acting together with a

harmony unprecedented amongst their distracted countrymen of that age; and, secondly, as a fraternity to whom was assigned a certain political aspect by their enemies. The civil and external relations of this new party he could not but have noticed, had he even omitted the religious doctrines which bound them together internally, as doctrines too remote from Roman* comprehension. In reality, so far from being a Christian, we can show that Josephus was not even a Jew, in any conscientious or religious sense. He had never taken the first step in the direction of Christianity; but was, as many other Jews were in that age, essentially a pagan; as little impressed with the true nature of the God whom his country worshipped, with his ineffable purity and holiness, as any idolatrous Athenian whatsoever.

The wonder therefore subsists, and revolves upon us with the more violence, after Whiston's efforts to extinguish it—how it could have happened that a writer, who passed his infancy, youth, manhood, in the midst of a growing sect so transcendently interesting to every philosophic mind, and pre-eminently so interesting to a Jew, should have left behind him, in a compass of eight hundred and fifty-four pages, double columns, each column having sixty-five lines (or a double ordinary octavo page), much of it relating to his own times, not one paragraph, line, or fragment of a line, by which it can be known that he ever heard of such a body as the Christians?

And to our mind, for reasons which we shall presently show, it is equally wonderful that he *should* talk of the Essenes, under the idea of a known, stationary, original sect amongst the Jews, as that he should *not* talk of the Chris-

* "*Roman* comprehension:"—The reader must remember that the audience addressed by Josephus was not a Jewish but a Roman audience.

tians; equally wonderful that he should remember the imaginary as that he should forget the real. There is not one difficulty, but two difficulties; and what we need is, not one solution but two solutions.

If, in an ancient palace, re-opened after it had been shut up for centuries, you were to find a hundred golden shafts or pillars, for which nobody could suggest a place or a use; and if, in some other quarter of the palace, far remote, you were afterwards to find a hundred golden sockets fixed in the floor—first of all, pillars which nobody could apply to any purpose, or refer to any place; secondly, sockets which nobody could fill—probably even "wicked Will Whiston" might be capable of a glimmering suspicion that the hundred golden shafts belonged to the hundred golden sockets. And if, upon applying the shafts to the sockets, it should turn out that each several shaft screwed into its own peculiar socket, why, in such a case, not "Whiston, Ditton, & Co." could resist the evidence, that each enigma had brought a key to the other; and that by means of two mysteries there had ceased even to be one mystery.

Now, then, first of all, before stating our objections to the Essenes as any permanent or known sect amongst the Jews, let us review as rapidly as possible the main features by which Josephus characterizes these supposed Essenes; and in a brief comment point out their conformity to what we know of the primitive Christians. That done, let us endeavour to explain all the remaining difficulties of the case. The words of Josephus we take from Whiston's translation; for, if we gave our own version, we might seem to have coloured it so as to favour our own views. But we do this unwillingly: for Whiston was a poor Grecian; and, what is worse, he knew very little about English.

1. "*The third sect*" (*i. e., third in relation to the*

Pharisees, who ranked as the first, and the Sadducees, who ranked as the second) "*are called Essenes. These last are Jews by birth, and seem to have a greater affection for one another than the other sects have.*"

We need not point out the strong conformity in this point to the distinguishing features of the new-born Christians, as they would be likely to impress the eye of a stranger. There was obviously a double reason for a stricter cohesion amongst the Christians internally, than could by possibility belong to any other sect: 1*st*, in the essential tendency of the whole Christian faith to a far more intense love than the world could comprehend, as well as in the express charge to love one another; 2*d*, in the strong compressing power of external affliction, and of persecution too certainly anticipated. The little flock, turned out to face a wide world of storms, naturally drew close together. Over and above the indefeasible hostility of the world to a spiritual morality, there was the bigotry of Judaical superstition on the one hand, and the bigotry of Paganism on the other. All this would move in mass against nascent Christianity, so soon as that moved; and well, therefore, might the instincts of the early Christians instruct them to act in the very closest concert and communion.

2. "*These men are despisers of riches, and so very communicative, as raises our admiration. Nor is there any one to be found among them who hath more than another; every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions, and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren.*"

In this account of the "communicativeness," as to temporal wealth, of the third sect, it is hardly necessary that we should point out the mirror which it holds up to the

habits of the very first Christians in Jerusalem, as we see them recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. This, the primary record of Christian history (for even the disciples were not in any full sense Christians until after the resurrection and the Divine afflatus), is echoed afterwards in various stages of primitive Christianity. But all these subsequent acts and monuments of early Christian faith were derived by imitation and by sympathy from the apostolic precedent in Jerusalem; as that again was derived from the "common purse" carried by the twelve disciples.

3. "*They have no certain city, but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sect come from other places, what they find lies open for them just as if it were their own: and they go in to such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them.*"

All Christian antiquity illustrates and bears witness to this, as a regular and avowed Christian habit. To this habit points St. Paul's expression of "*given to hospitality;*" and many passages in all the apostolical writings. Like other practices, however, that had been firmly established from the beginning, it is rather alluded to, and indirectly taken for granted and assumed, than prescribed; expressly to teach or enjoin it was as little necessary, or indeed open to a teacher, as with us it would be open to recommend marriage. What Christian could be imagined capable of neglecting such an institution?

4. "*For which reason they carry nothing with them when they travel into remote parts.*"

This dates itself from Christ's own directions (St. Luke x. 3, 4), "Go your way. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes." And, doubtless, many other of the primitive practices amongst the Christians were not adopted without a special command from Christ, traditionally retained by the

Church whilst standing in the same civil circumstances, though not committed to writing amongst the great press of matter circumscribing the choice of the Evangelists.

5. "*As for their piety towards God, it is very extraordinary: for before sun-rising they speak not a word about profane matters, but put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers.*"

This practice of crepuscular antelucan worship, possibly having reference to the ineffable mystery of the resurrection (all the Evangelists agreeing in the awful circumstance that it was very early in the morning, and one even saying, "whilst it was yet dark"), a symbolic pathos which appeals to the very depths of human passion—as if the world of sleep and the anarchy of dreams figured to our apprehension the dark worlds of sin and death—it happens remarkably enough that we find confirmed and countersigned by the testimony of the first open antagonist to our Christian faith. Pliny, in that report to Trajan so universally known to every class of readers, and so rank with everlasting dishonour to his own sense and equity, notices this point in the ritual of primitive Christianity. "However," says he, "they assured me that the amount of their fault, or of their error, was this,—that they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together *before it was light*, and to sing a hymn to Christ," &c. The date of Pliny's letter is about forty years after the siege of Jerusalem; about seventy-seven, therefore, after the crucifixion, when Josephus would be just seventy-two years old. But we may be sure, from collateral records, and from the entire uniformity of early Christianity, that a much longer lapse of time would have made no change in this respect.

6. "*They neglect wedlock; but they do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage.*"

This is a very noticeable article in his account of the

Essenes, and powerfully illustrates the sort of acquaintance which Josephus had gained with their faith and usages. In the first place, as to the doctrine itself, it tallies remarkably with the leanings of St. Paul. He allows of marriage, overruled by his own moral prudence. But evidently his bias was the other way. And the allowance is notoriously a concession to the necessities which experience had taught him, and by way of preventing greater evils: but an evil, on the whole, it is clear, that he regarded it. And naturally it was so in relation to that highest mode of spiritual life which the Apostles contemplated as a fixed ideal. Moreover, we know that the Apostles fell into some errors which must have affected their views in these respects. For a time at least they thought the end of the world close at hand: who could think otherwise that had witnessed the awful things which they had witnessed, or had drunk out of the same spiritual cup? Under such impressions, they reasonably pitched the key of Christian practice higher than else they would have done. So far as to the doctrine here ascribed to the Essenes. But it is observable, that in this place Josephus admits that these Essenes *did* tolerate marriage. Now, in his earlier notice of the same people, he had denied this. What do we infer from that? Why, that he came to his knowledge of the Essenes by degrees; and as would be likely to happen with regard to a sect sequestrating themselves and locking up their doctrines as secrets: which description exactly applies to the earliest Christians. The instinct of self-preservation obliged them to retreat from notoriety. Their tenets could not be learned easily; they were gathered slowly, indirectly, by fragments. This accounts for the fact that people standing outside, like Josephus or Philo-Judæus, got only casual glimpses of the truth, and such as were continually shifting. Hence at different

periods Josephus contradicts himself. But if he had been speaking of a sect as notorious as the Pharisees or Sadducees, no such error, and no such alteration of views, could have happened.

7. "*They are eminent for fidelity, and are the ministers of peace.*"

We suppose that it cannot be necessary to remind any reader of such characteristic Christian doctrines as—"Blessed are the peace-makers," &c.; still less of the transcendent demand made by Christianity for singleness of heart, uprightness, and entire conscientiousness; without which all pretences to Christian truth are regarded as mere hollow mockeries. Here, therefore, again we read the features, too plainly for any mistake, of pure Christianity. But let the reader observe keenly, had there been this pretended sect of Essenes teaching all this lofty and spiritual morality, it would have been a fair inference to ask what more or better had been taught by Christ: in which case there might still have remained the great redemptional and mediatorial functions for Christ; but, as to his Divine morality, it would have been forestalled. Such would have been the inference, and it is an inference which really *has been* drawn from this romance of the Essenes adopted as true history.

8. "*Whatsoever they say is firmer than an oath; but swearing is avoided by them; and they esteem it worse than perjury.*"

We presume that nobody can fail to recognise in this great scrupulosity the memorable command of Christ, delivered in such unexampled majesty of language, "Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool," &c. This was said in condemnation of a practice universal amongst the Jews; and if any man can believe that a visionary sect, of whom no

man ever heard except through two writers both lying under the same very natural mistake, could have come by blind accidents into such an inheritance of spiritual truth as is here described by Josephus, that man will find nothing beyond his credulity. For he presumes a revelation far beyond all the wisdom of the pagan world to have been attained by some unknown Jewish philosopher, so little regarded by his followers that they have not even preserved his name from oblivion.

Amongst the initiatory and probationary vows which these sectarians are required to take is this—"That he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially *to those in authority, because no one obtains the government without God's assistance.*" Here, again, we see a memorable precept of St. Paul and the Apostles generally; the same precept, and built on the very same reason, viz., that rulers are of God's appointment.

"They are long-lived also: insomuch that many of them live above a hundred years, by means of the simplicity of their diet."

Here we are reminded of St. John the Evangelist: whilst others, no doubt, would have attained the same age, had they not been cut off by martyrdom.

In many other points of their interior discipline, their white robes, their meals, their silence and gravity, we see in this account of the Essenes a mere echo of the primitive economy established among the first Christians, as we find it noticed up and down the *Apostolical Constitutions*.

It is remarkable that Josephus notices, as belonging to the sect of the Essenes, the order of "angels" or messengers. Now, everybody must remember this order of officers as a Christian institution noticed in the Apocalypse.

Finally, in all that is said of the contempt which the

Essenes showed for pain and death; and that "*although tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, yet could they not be made to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear, but that they smiled in their very torments*," &c., we see the regular habit of Christian martyrs through the first three centuries. We see that principle established amongst them so early as that first examination of Pliny's; for he is so well aware how useless it would be to seek for any discoveries by torture applied to the Christian *men*, that he resorts instantly to the torture of female servants. The secrecy, again, as to their opinions, is another point common to the supposed Essenes and the Christians. Why the Essenes, as an orthodox Jewish sect, should have practised any secrecy, Josephus would have found it hard to say; but the Christian reasons will appear decisive to any man who reflects.

But first of all, let us recur to the argument we have just employed, and summon you to a review of the New Testament. Christ, during his ministry in Palestine, is brought as if by special arrangement into contact with all known orders of men—Scribes and Doctors, Pharisees and Sadducees, Herodians and followers of the Baptist, Roman officers insolent with authority, tax-gatherers the Pariahs of the land, Galileans the most undervalued of the Jews, Samaritans hostile to the very name of Jew, rich men clothed in purple and poor men fishing for their daily bread, the happy and those that sate in darkness, wedding parties and funeral parties, solitudes amongst hills or sea-shores and multitudes that could not be counted, mighty cities and hamlets the most obscure, golden sanhedrims and the glorious temple where he spoke to myriads of the worshippers, and solitary corners where he stood in conference with a single contrite heart. Were the subject or the person different, one might ascribe a dramatic purpose and

a scenical art to the vast variety of the circumstances and situations in which Christ is introduced. And yet, whilst all other sorts and orders of men converse with him, never do we hear of any interview between him and the Essenes. Suppose one Evangelist to have overlooked such a scene, another would not. In part, the very source of the dramatic variety in the New Testament scenes, must be looked for in the total want of collusion amongst the Evangelists. Each throwing himself back upon overmastering remembrances, all-glorified to his heart, had no more need to consult a fellow-witness, than a man needs, in rehearsing the circumstances of a final parting with a wife or a child, to seek collateral vouchers for his facts. Thence it was, viz., because left to themselves, unmodified by each other, that they attained so much variety in the midst of so much inevitable sameness. . One evangelist was impressed by *this*, a second by *that*. And thus, it must have happened amongst four, that at least one would have noticed the Essenes. But no one of the four Gospels alludes to them. The Acts of the Apostles, again, whether by a fifth author or not, is a fifth body of remembrances, a fifth act of the memory applied to the followers of Christ. Yet neither does this notice them. The Apocalypse of St. John, reviewing the new church for a still longer period, and noticing all the great outstanding features of the state militant, then unrolling for Christianity, says not one word about them. St. Peter, St. James, utterly overlooked them. Lastly, which weighs more than all the rest, St. Paul, the learned and philosophic apostle, bred up in all the learning of the most orthodox amongst the Jews, gives no sign that he had ever heard of such people. In short, to sum up all in one sentence, the very word *Essene* and *Essenes* is not found in the New Testament.

Now, is it for one moment to be credited that a body of men so truly spiritual in the eternals of their creed, whatever might be the temporals of their practice, should have won no word of praise from Christ for that by which they so far exceeded other sects—no word of reproach for that by which they might happen to fall short of their own profession—no word of admonition, founded on the comparison between their good and their bad, their heavenly and earthly? Or, if that had been supposable, can we believe that Christ's enemies, so eager as they showed themselves to turn even the Baptist into a handle of reproach against the new teacher, would have lost the overwhelming argument derived from the Essenes? "A new command I give unto you." "Not at all," they would have retorted. "Not at all new. Everything spiritual in your ethics has been anticipated by the Essenes." It would have been alleged, that the function of Redeemer for Israel was to be judged and tried by the event. The only *instant* touchstone for the pretensions of Christ lay in the Divine character of his morality, and the spirituality of that worship which he taught. Miracles were or were not from God, according to the purposes to which they ministered. That moral doctrine and that worship were those purposes. By these only they could try the soundness of all beside; and if these had been forestalled by the Essenes, what remained for any new teacher or new founder of a religion? In fact, were the palpable lies of this Jew-traitor built on anything but delusions misinterpreted by his own ignorant heart, there would be more in that one tale of his about the Essenes to undermine Christianity, than in all the batteries of all the infidels to overthrow it. No infidel can argue away the spirituality of the Christian religion: attacks upon miracles leave *that* unaffected. But he who (confess-

ing the spirituality) derives it from some elder and unknown source, at one step evades what he could not master. He overthrows without opposition; and enters the citadel through ruins caused by internal explosion.

What then is to be thought? If this deathlike silence of all the evangelists, and all the apostles, makes it a mere impossibility to suppose the existence of such a sect as the Essenes in the time of Christ, did such a sect arise afterwards, viz., in the Epichristian generation? Or, if not, how and by what steps came up the romance we have been considering? Was there any substance in the tale? Or, if positively none, how came the fiction? Was it a conscious lie? Was it a mistake? Was it an exaggeration?

Now, our idea is as follows: What do we suppose the early Christians to have been called? By what name were they known amongst themselves and amongst others? *Christians?* Not at all. When it is said, "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch," we are satisfied that the meaning is not—this name, now general, was first used at Antioch; but that, whereas we followers of Christ generally call one another, and *are* called by a particular name X, in Antioch that name was not used; but from the very beginning they were called by another name, viz., Christians. At all events, since this name Christian was confessedly used at Antioch before it was used anywhere else, there must have been another name elsewhere for the same people. What *was* that name? It was "*The Brethren*" [οἱ ἀδελφοὶ]; and at times, by way of variety, to prevent the awkwardness of too monotonously repeating the same word, perhaps it was "*The Faithful*" [οἱ πιστοὶ]. The name *Christians* travelled, we are convinced, not immediately amongst themselves, but slowly amongst their enemies. It was a name of reproach; and the meaning

was—"We pagans are all worshippers of gods, such as they are; but this sect worships a man, and that man a malefactor." For, though Christ should properly have been known by his name, which was Jesus; yet, because his crime, in the opinion of the Jews, lay in the office he had assumed, in having made himself the *Christos*, the anointed of God, therefore it happened that he was published amongst the Roman world by that name: his offence, his "*titulus*" on the cross (the king, or the anointed) was made his Roman name. Accordingly Tacitus, speaking of some insurgents in Judea, says—"That they mutinied under the instigation of Christ* their original ring-leader" (*impulsore Chresto*). And no doubt it had become a scoffing name, until the Christians disarmed the scoff of its sting by assuming it themselves; as was done in the case of "the Beggars" in the Netherlands, of "the Methodists" in England, of the *Blacksmith* in Persia, &c.

Meantime, what name did the Christians bear in their birthplace? Were they called "the brethren" there? No. And why not? Simply because it had become too dangerous a name. To be bold, to affront all reasonable danger, was their instinct and their duty; but not to tempt utter extinction or utter reduction to imbecility. We read amiss, if we imagine that the fiery persecution, which raged against Christ, had burnt itself out in the act of the crucifixion. It slept, indeed, for a brief interval: but that was from necessity; for the small flock of scattered sheep easily secreted themselves. No sooner did they multiply a little, no sooner did their meetings again pro-

* *Christ*:—whereas naturally Tacitus should have used the *name* of the chief insurgent—*impulsore Jesu;* but he does not, because the assumption of royalty by anointing had caused the name to merge in the offence.

claim their "whereabouts," than the snake found them out, again raised its spiry crest amongst them, and again crushed them for a time. The martyrdom of St. Stephen showed that no jesting was intended. It was determined that examples should be made. It was resolved that this revolt against the temple (the Law and the Prophets) must be put down. The next event quickened this agency sevenfold. A great servant of the persecution, in the very agony of the storm which he was himself guiding and pointing, working the very artillery of Jerusalem upon some scent which his bloodhounds had found in Syria, suddenly, in one hour passed over to the enemy. What of that? Did that startle the persecution? Probably it did: failure from within was what they had not looked for. But the fear which it bred was sister to the wrath of hell. The snake turned round; but not for flight. It turned to fasten upon the revolter. St. Paul's authority as a leader in the Jewish councils availed him nothing after this. Orders were undoubtedly expedited from Jerusalem to Damascus, as soon as messengers could be interchanged, for his assassination. And assassinated he would have been, had he been twenty St. Pauls, but for his secret evasion, and his flight to Arabia. Idumea, probably a sort of Ireland to Judea, was the country to which he fled; where again he might have been found out, but his capture would have cost a negotiation; and in all likelihood he lay unknown amongst crowds. Nor did he venture to show his face again in Jerusalem for some years; and then again not till a term of fourteen years, half a generation, during which many of the burning zealots, and of those who could have challenged him personally as the great apostate, must have gone to their last sleep.

During the whole of this noviciate for Christianity, and in fact throughout the whole Epichristian era, there was a

brooding danger over the name and prospects of Christianity. To hold up a hand, to put forth a head in the blinding storm, was to perish. It was to solicit and tempt destruction. That could not be right. Those who were answerable for the great interest confided to them, if in their own persons they might have braved the anger of the times, were not at liberty to do so on this account, that it would have stopped effectually the expansion of the Church. Martyrdom and persecution formed the atmosphere in which it throve; but not the frost of death. What, then, did the fathers of the Church do? You read that, during a part of this Epichristian age, "the churches had peace." True, they had so. *But how?*

It was thus: They said to each other, If we are to stand such consuming fires as we have seen, one year will finish us all. And then what will become of the succession that we are to leave behind us? We must hide ourselves effectually. And this can be done only by symbolizing; *i.e.*, conducting our inter-communications through conventional signs. Any lesser disguise our persecutors will penetrate. But this, whilst effectually baffling them for the present, will also provide for the future nursing of an infant church. They proceeded, therefore, thus: "Let there be darkness," was the first word of command; "let us muffle ourselves in thick clouds which no human eye can penetrate. And towards this purpose let us immediately take a symbolic name. And, because any name that expresses or implies a secret fraternity—a fraternity bound together by any hidden tie or purpose—will instantly be challenged for the Christian brotherhood under a new mask, instantly the bloody Sanhedrim will get to their old practices, torturing our weaker members (as afterwards the cruel Pliny selected for torture the poor frail women-servants of the

brethren), and the wolf will be raging amongst our folds in three months, therefore two things are requisite; one, that this name which we assume, shall be such as to disarm suspicion (in this they acted upon the instinct of those birds which artfully construct signs and appearances to tempt away the fowler from their young ones); the other, that in case, after all, some suspicion should arise, and the enemy again break in, there must be three or four barriers to storm before he can reach, or even suspect, the stronghold in the centre."

Upon this principle all was arranged. First, for the name that was to disarm suspicion; what name could do that? Why, what *was* the suspicion? A suspicion that Christian embers were sleeping under the ashes. True: but why was that suspicious? Why had it ever been suspicious? For two reasons: because the Christian faith was supposed to carry a secret hostility to the Temple and its whole ritual economy; secondly, for an earnest political reason, because it was believed to tend, by mere necessity, to such tumults, intrigues, and fermenting cabals on revolutionary principles of movement, as would furnish the Roman, on tiptoe for this excuse, with a plea for taking away the Jewish name and nation; that is, for taking away their Jewish *autonomy* (or administration by their Mosaic code), which they still had, though otherwise in a state of dependency. Now then to meet this mode of suspicion, no name could be so admirably fitted as one drawn from the very ritual service of that very Temple which was supposed to be in danger. That Temple *was* in danger: the rocks on which it stood were already quaking beneath it. All was accomplished. Its doom had gone forth. Shadows of the coming fate were spreading fast before it. Its defenders had a dim misgiving of the storm that was gathering. But they mistook utterly the quarter from which it was to come. And

they closed the great gates against an enemy that entered by the postern. However, in any case, they could not apprehend a foe in a society that professed a special interest in Israel. The name chosen, therefore, was derived from the very costume of the Jewish High Priest, the pontifical ruler of the temple. This great officer wore upon his breast a splendid piece of jewellery; twelve precious stones were inserted in the breast-plate, representing the twelve sons of Jacob, or twelve tribes* of Israel: *and this was called the Essen*. Consequently, to announce themselves as *the Society of the Essen*, was to express a peculiar solicitude for the children of Israel. Under this mask nobody could suspect any hostility to Jerusalem or its temple; nobody, therefore, under the existing misconception of Christian objects and the Christian character, could suspect a Christian society.

But was not this hypocritical disguise? Not at all. A profession was thus made of paramount regard to Judea and her children. Why not? Christians everywhere turned with love, and yearning, and thankfulness the profoundest, to that "Holy City" (so called by Christ himself), which had kept alive for a thousand years the sole vestiges of pure faith, and which, for a far longer term, mystically represented that people which had known the true God, "when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones." Christians, or they would have been no Christians, everywhere prayed for her peace. And if the downfal of Jerusalem was connected with the rise of Christianity, that was not through any

* "*The Twelve Tribes*:"—It is a beautful circumstance in the symbology of the Jewish ritual, where all is symbolic and all significant, where all in Milton's language "was meant mysteriously," that the Ten Tribes were not blotted out from the breastplate after their revolt; no, nor after their idolatrous lapse, nor after their captivity, nor after their supposed utter dispersion. Their names still burned in the breastplate, though their earthly place knew them no more.

enmity borne to Jerusalem by Christians (as the Jews falsely imagine), but because it was not suitable for the majesty of God, as the father of truth, to keep up a separation amongst the nations when the fulness of time in his counsels required that all separation should be at an end. At his bidding the Temple had been raised. At his bidding the Temple must be destroyed. Nothing could have saved it but becoming Christian. The end was accomplished for which it had existed; a great river had been kept pure, that was now in the very act and process of disemboguing itself into main ocean.

But as to any hypocrisy in the fathers of this indispensable scheme for keeping alive the fire that burned on the altar of Christianity, that was impossible. So far from needing to assume more love for Judaism than they really had, we know that their very infirmity was to have by much too sectarian and exclusive a regard for those who were represented by the temple. The Bible, which conceals nothing of any men's errors, does not conceal that. And we know that all the weight of the great intellectual apostle was necessary to overrule the errors, in this point, of St. Peter, backed no doubt by a party. The fervid apostle erred; and St. Paul "withstood him to his face." But his very error proves the more certainly his sincerity and singleness of heart in setting up a society that should profess in its name the service of Jerusalem and her children as it's primary function. The name *Essen* and *Essenes* was sent before to disarm suspicion and as a pledge of loyal fidelity to a patriotic interest.

Next, however, this society was to be a secret society; an Eleusinian society; a Freemason society. For, if it were not, how was it to provide for the culture of Christianity? Now, if the reader pauses a moment to review

the condition of Palestine and the neighbouring countries at that time, he will begin to see the opening there was for such a society. The condition of the times was agitated and tumultuous beyond anything witnessed amongst men, except at the Reformation, and at the French Revolution from 1789 to 1794. The flame on the pagan altars was growing pale, the oracles over the earth were muttering their alarm, panic terrors were falling upon nations, whispers circulating from nobody knew whence, that out of the East about this time should arise some great and mysterious deliverer. This whisper had spread to Rome—was current everywhere. It was one of those awful whispers that have no author. Nobody could ever trace it. Nobody could ever guess by what path it had travelled. Like pestilence, it moved in darkness. But observe, in that generation, at Rome and all parts of the Mediterranean to the west of Palestine, the word "Oriens" had a technical and limited meaning ; it was restricted to Syria, of which Palestine formed a section. This use of the word will explain itself to anybody who looks at a map of the Mediterranean as seen from Italy. But some years after the Epichristian generation, the word began to extend ; and very naturally, as the Roman armies began to make permanent conquests nearer to the Euphrates. Under these remarkable circumstances, and agitated beyond measure between the oppression of the Roman armies on the one hand, and the belief of an immediate Divine relation on the other, all thoughtful Jews were disturbed in mind. The more conscientious, the more they were agitated. Was it their duty to resist the Romans ? God could deliver them doubtless ; but God worked oftentimes by human means. Was it his pleasure that they should resist by arms ? Others again replied, "If you do, then you prepare an excuse for

the Romans to extirpate your nation." Many, again, turned more to religious hopes: these were they who, in scriptural language, "waited for the consolation of Israel;" that is, they trusted in that Messiah who had been promised, and they yearned for his manifestation. They mourned over Judea; they believed that in a spiritual sense she had rebelled; but she had been afflicted, and perhaps her transgressions might now be blotted out. Of this class was he who took Christ in his arms when an infant in the temple. Of this class were the two rich men, Joseph and Nicodemus, who united to bury him. But even of this class many there were who took different views of the functions properly belonging to the Messiah; and many that, either through this difference of original views, or from imperfect acquaintance with the life of Jesus, doubted whether he were indeed the promised Messiah. Even John the Baptist doubted this; and his question upon that point, addressed to Christ himself, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" has been generally fancied singularly at war with his own earlier testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." But perhaps it is not. The offices of inspired intercourse with the coming changes for Israel were prophetically announced as revolving through a succession of characters—Elias, "that prophet," and the Messiah. The series might even be more complex. And the Baptist, who did not know himself to be Elias, might reasonably be in doubt (and *at a time when his career was only beginning*) whether Jesus were the Messiah.

Now, out of these mixed elements—men in every stage and gradation of belief or spiritual knowledge, but all musing, pondering, fermenting in their minds; all tempest-shaken, sorrow-haunted, perplexed, hoping, seeking, doubting, trusting—the apostles would see abundant means for

peopling the lower or initiatory ranks of their new society. Such a craving for light from above probably never existed. The land was on the brink of convulsions, and all men felt it. Even amongst the rulers in Jerusalem had been some who saw the truth of Christ's mission, though selfish terrors had kept back their testimony. From every rank and order of men, the meditative would crowd into a society where they would all receive sympathy, whatever might be their views, and many would receive light.

This society, how was it constituted? In the innermost, or central class (which remember is the masked and secret class), were placed, no doubt, all those, and those only, who were thoroughly Christians. The danger was from Christianity. And this danger was made operative only by associating with the mature and perfect Christian any false brother, any half-Christian, any hypocritical Christian, any wavering Christian. To meet this danger there must be a winnowing and a sifting of all candidates. And because the danger was awful, involving not one but many, not a human interest but a heavenly interest; therefore these winnowings and siftings must be many, must be repeated, must be soul-searching. Nay, even that will not suffice. Oaths, pledges to God as well as to man, must be exacted. All this suppose done: serpents by experience, in the midst of their dove-like faith, the apostles acted as wise stewards for God. They surrounded their own central consistory with lines impassable to treachery. Josephus, the blind Jew (blind in heart, we mean, and understanding), reporting a matter of which he had no comprehension, nor could have—even this man, in his utter darkness, telegraphs to us by many signals, rockets thrown up, which come round, and are visible to us, but unseen by *him*, what it is that the apostles were about. He tells us expressly,

that a preparatory or trial period of two years was exacted of every candidate before his admission to *any* order; that, after this probationary attendance is finished, "they are parted into four classes;" and these classes, he tells us, are so severely separated from all intercommunion, that merely to have touched each other was a pollution requiring a solemn purification. Finally, as if all this were nothing, though otherwise disallowing of oaths, yet in this as in a service of God, oaths, which Josephus styles "tremendous," are exacted of each member, that he will reveal nothing of what he learns.

Who can fail to see, in these multiplied precautions for guarding what according to Josephus is no secret at all, nor anything approaching to a secret, that here we have a central Christian society, secret from necessity, cautious to excess from the extremity of the danger, and surrounding themselves in their outer rings by merely *Jew* pupils, but Jews whose state of mind promised a hopeful soil for the solemn and affecting discoveries which awaited them in the higher stages of their progress. Here is the true solution of this mysterious society, the Essenes, never mentioned in any one record of the Christian generation, and that because it first took its rise in the necessities and subtle dangers of the Epichristian generation. There is more by a good deal to say of these Essenes; but this is enough for explaining their position. And if any man asks how they came to be traced to so fabulous an antiquity, the account now given easily explains that. Three authors only mention them—Pliny, Philo-Judæus, and Josephus. Pliny builds upon these two last, and other Jewish romancers. The two last may be considered as contemporaries. And all that they allege as to the antiquity of the sect, flows naturally from the condition and circumstances of the *outermost* (*or purely*

Jew) *circle* in the series of the classes. These were occupied exclusively with Judaism. And Judaism had in fact, as we all know, that real antiquity in its people, and its rites, and its symbols, which these *uninitiated* authors understand and fancy to have been meant of the *Essenes* as a total sect.

The secret history of Judæa, through the two generations preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, might yet be illuminated a little better than it has been by Josephus. It would, however, require a separate paper. At present we shall take but a glance or two at that subject, and merely in reference to the Essenes. Nothing shows the crooked conduct of Josephus so much as the utter perplexity, the mere labyrinth of doubts, in which he has involved the capital features of the last Jewish war. Two points only we notice, for their connexion with the Essenes.

First, What was the cause, the outstanding pretext, on either side, for the Jewish insurrectionary war? We know well what were the real impulses to that war; but what was the capital and overt act on either side which forced the Jewish irritation into a hopeless contest? What was the ostensible ground alleged for the war?

Josephus durst not have told, had he known. He must have given a Roman, an *ex parte* statement, at any rate; and let that consideration never be lost sight of in taking his evidence. He might blame a particular Roman, such as Gessius Florus, because he found that Romans themselves blamed *him*. He might vaunt his veracity and his παρρησία in a little corner of the general story; but durst he speak plainly on the broad field of Judæan politics? Not for his life. Or suppose the Roman magnanimity to have taken off his shackles, what became of his court favour and preferment, in case he spoke freely of Roman policy as a system?

Hence it is that Josephus shuffles so miserably when attempting to assign the cause or causes of the war. Four different causes he assigns in different places, not one of which is other than itself an effect from higher causes, and a mere symptom of the convulsions working below. For instance, the obstinate withdrawal of the daily sacrifice offered for Cæsar, which is one of the causes alleged, could not have occurred until the real and deep-seated causes of that war had operated on the general temper for some time. It was a public insult to Rome: would have occasioned a demand for explanation; would have been revoked; the immediate author punished; and all would have subsided into a personal affair, had it not been supported by extensive combinations below the surface, which could no longer be suppressed. Into *them* we are not going to enter. We wish only to fix attention upon the ignorance of Josephus, whether unaffected in this instance, or assumed for the sake of disguising truths unacceptable to Roman ears.

This question of itself has much to do with the origin of the Essenes.

Secondly, Who were those *Sicarii* or swordsmen of whom Josephus talks so much during the latter years of Jerusalem? Can any man believe so monstrous a fable as this, viz., that not one, but thousands of men were confederated for purposes of murder; *2dly*, of murder not interested in its own success; murder not directed against any known determinate objects, but murder indiscriminate, secret, objectless, what a lawyer might call *homicidium vagum*; *3dly*, that this confederacy should subsist for years, should levy war, should entrench itself in fortresses; *4thly* (which is more incomprehensible than all the rest), should talk and harangue in the spirit of sublime martyrdom to some holy interest; *5thly*, should breathe the same spirit into women and little

children; and *finally*, that all, with one accord, rather than submit to foreign conquest, should choose to die in one hour, from the oldest to the youngest? Such a tale in its outset, in the preliminary confederation, is a tale of ogres and ogresses, not of human creatures trained under a Divine law to a profound sense of accountability. Such a tale, in its latter sections, is a tale of martyrs more than human. Such a tale, as a whole, is self-contradictory. A vile purpose makes vile all those that pursue it. Even the East Indian Thugs are not congregated by families. It is much if ten thousand families furnish one Thug. And as to the results of such a league, is it possible that a zealous purpose of murder, of murder for the sake of murder, should end in nobility of spirit so eminent, that nothing in Christian martyrdoms goes beyond the extremity of self-sacrifice which even their enemies have granted to the Sicarii? "Whose courage," we are quoting from the bitterest of enemies, "whose courage, or shall we call it madness, everybody was amazed at; for, when all sorts of torments that could be imagined were applied to their bodies, not one of them would comply so far as to confess, or seem to confess, that Cæsar was their lord; as if they received those torments, and the very fury of the furnace which burned them to ashes, with bodies that were insensible, and with souls that exceedingly rejoiced. But what most of all astonished the beholders was the courage of the children; for not one of all these children was so far subdued by the torments it endured, as to confess Cæsar for its lord. Such a marvellous thing for endurance is the tender and delicate body of man, when supported by an unconquerable soul!"

No, no, reader; there is villany at work in this whole story about the Sicarii. We are duped, we are cheated, we are mocked. Felony, conscious murder, never in this world

led to such results as these. Conscience it was, that must have acted here. No power short of that, ever sustained frail women and children in such fiery trials. A conscience it may have been erring in its principles; but those principles must have been Divine. Resting on any confidence less than *that*, the resolution of women and children so tried must have given way. Here, too evidently, we have the genuine temper of the Maccabees, struggling and suffering in the same spirit and with the same ultimate hopes.

After what has been exposed with regard to Josephus, we presume that *his* testimony against the Sicarii will go for little. That man may readily be supposed to have borne false witness against his brethren who is proved to have born false witness against God. Him, therefore, or any thing that he can say, we set aside. But as all is still dark about the Sicarii, we shall endeavour to trace their real position in the Jewish war. For merely to prove that they have been calumniated does not remove the cloud that rests upon their history. That, indeed, cannot be removed *now* in a manner quite satisfactory; but we see enough to indicate the purity of their intentions. And, with respect to their enemy Josephus, let us remember one fact, which merely the want of a personal interest in the question has permitted to lie so long in the shade, viz., that three distinct causes made it really impossible for that man to speak the truth. First, his own partisanship: having adopted one faction, he was bound to regard all others as wrong and hostile: Secondly, his captivity and interest: in what regarded the *merits* of the cause, a Roman prisoner *durst* not have spoken the truth. These causes of distortion or falsehood in giving that history would apply even to honest men, unless with their honesty they combined a spirit of martyrdom. But there was a third cause peculiar to the

position of Josephus, viz., conscious guilt and shame. He could not admit others to have been right but in words that would have confounded himself. If they were not mad, he was a poltroon : if they had done their duty as patriots, then was he a traitor ; if they were not frantic, then was Josephus an apostate. This was a logic which required no subtle dialectician to point and enforce ; simply the narrative, if kept steady to the fact and faithful, must silently suggest that conclusion to everybody. And for that reason, had there been no other, it was *not* steady ; for that reason it was *not* faithful. Now, let us turn to the Sicarii. Who were they ?

Thirdly, It is a step towards the answer if we ask previously, *Who were the Galileans ?* Many people read Josephus under the impression that, of course, this term designates merely the inhabitants of the two Galilees. We, by diligent collation of passages, have convinced ourselves that it does not ; it means a particular faction in Jewish politics. And, which is a fact already noticed by Eusebius, it often includes many of the new Christian sect. But this requires an explanation.

Strange it seems to us that men should overlook so obvious a truth as that in every age Christianity must have counted amongst its nominal adherents the erring believer, the partial believer, the wavering believer, equally with the true, the spiritual, the entire, and the steadfast believer. What sort of believers were those who would have taken Christ and forcibly made him a king? Erroneous believers, it must be admitted ; but still in some points, partially and obscurely, they must have been powerfully impressed by the truth which they had heard from Christ. Many of these might fall away when that personal impression was withdrawn ; but many must have survived all causes of de-

pression. *Semi-Christians* there must always have been in great numbers. Those who were such in a merely religious view we believe to have been called Nazarenes; those in whom the political aspects, at first universally ascribed to Christianity, happened to predominate, were known by the more general name of Galileans. This name expressed in its foremost element opposition to the Romans; in its secondary element, Christianity. And its rise may be traced thus:—

Whoever would thoroughly investigate the very complex condition of Palestine in our Saviour's days, must go back to Herod the Great. This man, by his peculiar policy and his power, stood between the Jews and the Romans as a sort of Janus or indifferent mediator. Any measure which Roman ignorance would have inflicted, unmodified, on the rawest condition of Jewish bigotry, he contrived to have tempered and qualified. For his own interest, and not with any more generous purpose, he screened from the Romans various ebullitions of Jewish refractoriness; and from the Jews he screened all accurate knowledge of the probable Roman intentions. But after his death, and precisely during the course of our Saviour's life, these intentions transpired: reciprocal knowledge and menaces were exchanged; and the elements of insurrection began to mould themselves silently, but not steadily; for the agitation was great and increasing as the crisis seemed to approach. Herod the Great, as a vigorous prince, and very rich, might possibly have maintained the equilibrium, had he lived. But this is doubtful. In his old age various events had combined to shake his authority, viz., the tragedies in his own family, and especially the death of Mariamne;* by which, like Ferdinand of

* "*Especially the death of Mariamne.*"—There is a remarkable proof extant of the veneration attached in Jewish imagination to the

Arragon, or our Henry VII., under the same circumstances, he seemed in equity to lose his claim upon the throne. But, above all, his compliance with idolatry (according to the Jewish interpretation), in setting up the golden eagle by way of homage to Rome, gave a shock to his authority that never could have been healed. Out of the affair of the golden eagle grew, as we are persuaded, the sect of the Herodians —those who justified a compromising spirit of dealing with the Romans. This threw off, as its antipole, a sect furiously opposed to the Romans. That sect, under the management of Judas (otherwise called Theudas), expanded greatly; he was a Galilean, and the sect were therefore naturally called Galileans. Into this main sea of Jewish nationality emptied themselves all other less powerful sects that, under any modification, avowed an anti-Roman spirit. The religious sect of the Christians was from the first caught and hurried away into this overmastering vortex. No matter that Christ lost no opportunity of teaching that his kingdom was not of this world. Did he not preach a new salvation to the House of Israel? Where could that lie but through resistance to Rome? His followers resolved to place him at their head as a king; and his crucifixion in those stormy times was certainly much influenced by the belief that, as the object of political attachment, he had become dangerous whether sanctioning that attachment or not.

Out of this sect of Galileans, comprehending all who avowed a Jewish nationality (and therefore many semi-Christians, that is, men who, in a popular sense, and under whatever view, had professed to follow Christ), arose the

memory of this lady as a Maccabee. Long after her death, a pretender (or alleged pretender) to the name and rights of Alexander, one of her two murdered sons, appeared at Rome, and instantly drew to himself the enthusiastic support of all the Jews throughout Italy.

sect of Sicarii; that is, out of a vast multitude professing goodwill to the service, these men separated themselves as the men of action, the executive ministers, the self-devoting soldiers. This is no conjecture. It happens that Josephus, who had kept us in the dark about these Sicarii in that part of his narrative which most required some clue to their purposes, afterwards forgets himself, and incidentally betrays* that the Sicarii had originally been an offset from the sect founded by Judas the Galilean; that their general purpose was the same; so that, no doubt, it was a new feature of the time giving a new momentary direction to the efforts of the patriotic which had constituted the distinction and which authorized the denomination. From the Galileans it is probable that the Sicarii differed only as the brave doer differs from the clamorous invoker. But the Sicarii, you say, used unhallowed means. Possibly not. We do not know what means they used, except most indistinctly from their base and rancorous enemy. The truth, so far as it can be descried through the mist of ages and the fury of partisanship, appears to be, that, at a moment when law slumbered and police was inefficient, they assumed the duties of resistance to a tyranny which even the Roman apologist admits to have been insufferable. They are not heard of as actors until the time when Gessius Florus, by opening the floodgates to military insolence, had himself given a license to an armed reaction. Where justice was sought in vain, probably the Sicarii showed themselves as ministers of a sudden retribution. When the vilest outrages were offered by foreigners to their women, probably they "visited" for such atrocities. That state of things, which caused the tribunal to slumber, privileged the individual to wake. And

* *Wars*, b. vii. chap. 8. sect. 1.

in a land (by which word we mean Syria as a whole, not Palestine exclusively) whose inspired monuments recorded for everlasting praise the acts of Judith, of Samson, of Judas Maccabæus, these summary avengers, the Sicarii, might reasonably conceive that they held the same heavenly commission under the same earthly oppression.

Reviewing the whole of that calamitous period, combining the scattered notices of the men and their acts, and the reflections of both thrown back from the mirrors offered to us by the measures of counteraction adopted at the time, we have little doubt that the Sicarii and the Zealots were both products from the same great sect of the Galileans; and that in an imperfect sense or by tendency all were Christians.

But also we believe that this very political leaven it was, as dispersed through the body of the Galileans, which favoured the projection of a new order called the Essenes, from the main body; this political taint, we mean to say, combined with the danger of a *proselytizing* Christianity. In that anarchy, which through the latter years of Nero covered Judæa as with the atmosphere of hell, the Christian fathers saw the necessity of separating themselves from these children of violence. They might be right politically —and certainly they began in patriotism—but too often the apprehensive consciences of Christians recoiled from the vengeance in which they ended. By tolerating the belief that they countenanced the Galileans or Sicarii, the primitive Church felt that she would be making herself a party to their actions, often bloody and vindictive, and sometimes questionable on any principles, since private enmities would too easily mingle with public motives, and if right, would be right in an earthly sense. But the persecution which arose at Jerusalem would strengthen these conscien-

tious scruples by others of urgent prudence. A sect that proselytized was at any rate a hazardous sect in Judæa; and a sect that had drawn upon itself persecution must have felt a triple summons to the instant assumption of a disguise.

Upon this warning, we may suppose, arose the secret society of the Essenes; and its organization was most artful. In fact, the relations of Judaism to Christianity furnished a means of concealment such as could not have otherwise existed without positive deceit. By arranging four concentric circles about one mysterious centre—by suffering no advances from the outside to the innermost ring unless through years of probation, through multiplied trials of temper, multiplied obligations upon the conscience to secrecy, the Christian fathers were enabled to lead men onwards insensibly from intense Judaic bigotry to the purest form of Christianity. The outermost circle received those candidates only whose zeal for rigorous Judaism argued a hatred of pagan corruptions, and therefore gave some pledge for religious fervour. In this rank of novices no ray of light broke out from the centre—no suspicion of any alien doctrine dawned upon *them:* all was Judaic, and the whole Mosaic theology was cultivated alike. This we will call the ultimate rank. Next, in the penultimate rank, the eye was familiarized with the prophecies respecting the Messiah, and somewhat exclusively pointed to that doctrine, and such other doctrines in the Mosaic scheme as express an imperfection, a tendency, a call for an integration. In the third, or ante-penultimate rank, the attention was trained to the general characters of the Messiah, as likely to be realized in some personal manifestation; and a question was probably raised, as if for investigation, in what degree these characters met and were

exemplified in the mysterious person who had so lately engaged the earnest attention of all Palestine. He had assumed the office of Messiah: he had suffered for that assumption at Jerusalem. By what evidences was it ascertained, in a way satisfactory to just men, that he was *not* the Messiah? Many points, it would be urged as by way of unwilling concession, did certainly correspond between the mysterious person and the prophetic delineation of the idea. Thus far no suspicion has been suffered to reach the disciple, that he is now rapidly approaching to a torrent that will suck him into a new faith. Nothing has transpired, which can have shocked the most angry Jewish fanaticism. And yet all is ready for the great transition. But at this point comes the last crisis for the aspirant. Under colour of disputing the claims of Christ, the disciple has been brought acquainted with the whole mystery of the Christian theory. If his heart is good and true, he has manifested by this time such a sense of the radiant beauty which has been gradually unveiled, that he reveals his own trustworthiness. If he retains his scowling Jewish bigotry, the consistory at the centre are warned, and trust him no farther. He is excluded from the inner ranks, and is reconciled to this exclusion (or, if not, is turned aside from suspicion) by the impression conveyed to him that these central ranks are merely the governing ranks,—highest in power, but not otherwise distinguished in point of doctrine.

Thus, though all is true from first to last, from centre to circumference—though nothing is ever taught but the truth—yet, by the simple precaution of graduation, and of not teaching everywhere the whole truth, but above all, by teaching any part of the truth in the character of hostile acceptors, and as an unwelcome concession extorted from unwilling hearers, it happened that in the very midst of truth

Divine, were attained all the benefits of deceit the most earthly. The case was as though the colour of blue were prohibited and a dangerous colour. But upon a suggestion that yellow is a most popular colour, and green tolerated, whilst the two extremes of blue and yellow are both blended and confounded in green, this last is selected for the middle rank; and then breaking it up by insensible degradations into the blue tints towards the secret interior, and the yellow towards the outer rings, the case is so managed as to present the full popular yellow at the outside, and the celestial blue at the hidden centre.

Such we offer as the constitution of the Essenes, in which, however, the reader must not overlook one fact, that, because the danger of Christianity as a religious profession was confined, during the Epichristian age, to Judæa, therefore the order of the Essenes was confined to that region; and that in the extra-Syrian churches, the Christians of Palestine were known simply as the Brethren of Jerusalem, of Sepphoris, &c, without further designation or disguise. Let us now see, having stated the particular circumstances in which this disguise of a secret society called Essenes arose, what further arguments can be traced for identifying these Essenes with the Christians of Palestine.

We have already pursued the Essenes and the Christians through ten features of agreement. Now let us pursue them through a few others. And let the logic of the parallel be kept steadily in view: above, we show some characteristic reputed to be true of the Essenes; below, we show that this same characteristic is known from other sources to be true of the Christians.

No. I.—*The Essenes*, according to Josephus, *were in the habit of prophesying.* The only prophets known in the days of the Apostles, and recognised as such by the Chris-

tian writers, Agabus, for instance, and Anna, were Christians of the Christian brotherhood in Judæa.

"*And it is but seldom*," says Josephus, "*they miss in their predictions.*" Josephus could not but have been acquainted with this prophecy of Agabus, too practical, too urgent, too local not to have rung throughout Judæa; before the event, as a warning, after it, as a great providential miracle. He must therefore have considered Agabus as one of those people whom he means by the term Essenes. Now *we* know him for a Christian. *Ergo*, here is a case of identity made out between a Christian, owned for such by the Apostles, and one of the Essenes, owned for such by Josephus

No II —*The Essenes particularly applied themselves to the study of medicine* —This is very remarkable in a sect like the Essenes, who, from their rigorous habits of abstinence, must of all men have had the least personal call for medicine · but not at all remarkable if the Essenes are identified with the Christians For,

1 Out of so small a number as four Evangelists, one was a physician, which shows at least the *fact* that medicine was cultivated amongst the Christians. But,

2 The *reason* of this will appear immediately in the example (E) left by Christ, and in the motives (M) to that example.

As to (E) the example, at least nine in ten of Christ's miracles were *medical* or *therapeutic* miracles, miracles applied to derangements of the human system.

As to the motives (M) which governed our Saviour in this particular choice, it would be truly ridiculous and worthy of a modern utilitarian, to suppose that Christ would have suffered his time to be occupied, and the great vision of his contemplations to be interrupted, by an

employment so trifling (trifling surely by comparison with his *transcendent* purposes) as the healing of a few hundreds, more or less, in one small district through one brief triennium. This healing office was adopted, not chiefly for its own sake, but partly as a symbolic annunciation of a superior healing, already expressed in the name *Iesus*, from the Greek verb for *healing;* chiefly, however, as the best means, in an eastern land, of *advertising his approach far and wide, and thus convoking the people to his instructions.* From Barbary to Hindustan—from the setting to the rising sun—it is notorious that no travelling character is so certainly a safe one as that of *hakim* or physician. As he advances on his route, the news flies before him; disease is evoked as by the ròd of Amram's son; the beds of sick people, in every rank, are ranged along the road-sides; and the beneficent dispenser of health or of relief moves through the prayers of hope on the one side, and of gratitude on the other. Well may this character be a protection; for not only is every invalid in the land his friend from the first, but every one who loves or pities an invalid. In fact, the character is *too* favourable, because it soon becomes burdensome; so that of late, in Affghanistan, Bokhara, &c., Englishmen have declined its aid: for inevitably it impedes a man's progress; and it exposes him to two classes of applications, one embarrassing from the extravagance of its expectations (as that a man should understand doubtful or elaborate symptoms at a glance), the other degrading to an Englishman's feelings, by calling upon him for aphrodisiacs or other modes of collusion with Oriental sensuality. This medical character, this all-persuasive title of *hakim*, the Apostles and their delegates adopted, using it both as the trumpet of summons to some central rendezvous, and also as the very best means of opening the heart

to religious influences—the heart softened already by suffering, turned inwards by solitary musing; or melted, perhaps, by relief from anguish, into fervent gratitude. This, upon consideration, we believe to have been the secret key to the Apostolic meaning in sending abroad the report, which report accordingly re-emerges naturally in the Josephan report of the Essenes (or masquerading Christians), that they cultivated medicine. They became what so many of us Englishmen have become in Oriental countries, *hakims;* and as with us, that character was assumed as a disguise for ulterior purposes that could not have been otherwise obtained *—our purposes were liberal, theirs divine. Therefore we conclude our argument No. II., by saying, that this medical feature in the Essenes is not only found in the Christians, but is found radicated in the very constitution of that body, as a *proselytizing* order, who could not dispense with some excuse or other for assembling the people in crowds.

No. III.—*The Essenes think that oil is a defilement.*—So says Josephus, as one who stood in the outermost rank of the order, admitted to a knowledge of some distinctions, but never to the secret meaning upon which those distinctions turned. Now with respect to this new characteristic, what is our logical duty? It is our duty to show that the Essenes, supposing them to be the latent Christians,

* "*That could not have been otherwise obtained:*"—One most important fact has been entirely overlooked. Neither in Syria, nor any part of Asia Minor, of Achaia, &c., could the Apostles have called a general meeting of the people without instant liability to arrest as public disturbers. But the character of HAKIM furnished a privileged case, which operated as a summons, instant, certain, safe, uniformly intelligible to others, and for the hakim himself as potent in the result as it was rapid and fluent in its mode of publication.

had a special motive for rejecting oil; whereas on any other assumption they had no such motive. And next, we will show that this special motive has sustained itself in the traditionary usages of a remote posterity.

First of all, then, how came the Jews ever to use oil at all for the purpose of anointing their persons? It was adopted (Who says so? *We* say so) as a Grecian luxury, from their Grecian fellow-townsmen in cities without number, under the Syro-Macedonian kings. Not only in Syria proper, but in many other territories adjacent to Judæa, there were cities like the two Cæsareas, the maritime and the inland, which were divided between Greeks and Jews; from which equality of rights came feuds and dreadful calamities in the end, but previously a strong contagion of Grecian habits. Hence, in part, it arose that the Jews in our Saviour's time were far from being that simple people which they *had* been whilst insulated in gloomy seclusion, or whilst associated only with monotonous oriental neighbours. Amongst other luxuries which they had caught from their Grecian neighbours were those of the bath and the palæstra. But in Jerusalem, as the heart of Judæa,* and the citadel of Jewish principle, some front of resistance was still opposed to these exotic habits. The language was one aid to this resistance; for elsewhere the Greek was gaining ground, whilst here the Chaldee prevailed. But a

* "*As the heart of Judæa:*"—It was an old belief amongst the Jews, upon their droll ideas of cosmography, that Judæa was the central region of the earth, and that Jerusalem was the *omphalos* or navel of Judæa—an idea which the Greeks applied to Delphi. And thus we see that the Chinese man (or monkey), although he is *par excellence* the beast of the earth, nevertheless has a high sanction to plead for his conceit about China as a central region, round which (on its outer margin) are crawling all the barbarians of our planet.

stronger repulsion to foreigners was the eternal gloom of the public usages. No games in Jerusalem, no théatre, no hippodrome; for all these you must go down to the sea-side, where Cæsarea, though built by a Jew, and half-peopled by Jews, was the Roman metropolis of Palestine, and with every sort of Roman luxury. To this stern Jerusalem standard all Jews conformed in the proportion of their patriotism; to Græcize or not to Græcize had become a test of patriotic feeling; and thus far the Essenes had the same general reasons as the Christians (supposing them for the moment two distinct orders of men) for setting their faces against the luxurious manners of the age. But if the Essenes were Christians, then we infer that they had a much stronger and a special motive to all kinds of abstinence, from the memorable charge of Christ to his evangelizing disciples; for which charge there was a double motive: *1st*, To raise an ideal of abstinence; *2d*, To release the disciple from all worldly cares, and concentrate his thoughts upon his mission. Now, the Essenes, if Christians, stood precisely in that situation of evangelizers.

Even thus far, therefore, the Essenes, as Christians, would have higher motives to abstinence than simply as a sect of Jews; yet still against oil, merely as a mode of luxury, their reasons were no stronger than against any luxury in any other shape. But a Christian of that day had a far more special restraint with regard to the familiar use of oil—not as a luxury, but as a consecrated symbol, he regarded it with awe—oil was to him under a perpetual interdict. The very name *Christos*, the anointed, gave in one instant an inaugurating solemnity, a baptismal value, to the act of anointing. Christians bearing in their very name (though then, by the supposition, "a secret name") a record and everlasting memorial of that *chrism* by which

their Founder was made the Anointed of God, thought it little consistent with reverential feelings to use that consecrated rite of anointing in the economy of daily life. They abstained from this Grecian practice, therefore, not, as the ignorant Josephus imagines, from despising it, but from too much revering it. The symbolic meaning overpowered and eclipsed its natural meaning; and they abstained from the unction of the palæstra just as any man amongst ourselves, the least liable to superstition, would (if he had any reverential principles) recoil from the use of sacramental vessels in a service of common household life. Would a good man with reverential feelings developed in his nature, be capable of taking his breakfast from a sacramental vessel? Quite as little could the Christians or Essenes use oil for a purpose of luxury. And beside the consecration of oil in the very name of *Christ* and *Christian*, oil was carried in those early ages of Christianity to the beds of dying persons.

After this explanation of *our* view, we shall hardly need to go forward in proof, that this sanctity of the oil and of the anointing act has sustained itself in traditionary usages, and propagated its symbolic meaning to a posterity far distant from the Essenes. The most solemn of the ceremonies in the coronation of Christian kings is a memorial of this usage so reverentially treated by the Essenes. The affecting rite by which a new-born stranger upon earth is introduced within the fold of the Christian Church, is but the prolongation of that ancient chrism. And so essential in earlier ages, was the presence of the holy Judæan oil used by the first Christians, were it only to the amount of one solitary drop, that volumes might be collected on the exertions made for tending the trees which produced it, and if possible for multiplying or transplanting

them. Many eastern travellers in our own day have given the history of those consecrated trees, and their slow declension to the present moment; and to this hour, in our London bills of mortality, there is one subdivision headed, "*Chrysom* children,"* which echoes from a distance of almost two thousand years the very act and ceremony which was surrounded with so much reverence by the Essenes.

No. IV.—*The Essenes think it a thing of good omen to be dressed in white robes.*—Yes; here again we find the external fact reported by Josephus, but with his usual ignorance of its symbolic value, and the secret record which it involved. He does not pretend to have been more than a novice; that is, at most he had been admitted into the lowest or outermost class, where no hint would be given of the Christian mysteries that would open nearer to the centre. The white robes were, of course, either the baptismal robes, the *albatæ vestes* noticed in the foot-note, or

* "*Chrysom children:*"—Tell a child of three years old to pronounce the word *helm;* nine times out of ten it will say *helom*, from the imperfection of its organs. By this mode of corruption came the word *chrysom*, from the baptismal *chrism* of the early Christians. In England if a child dies within the first month of its life, it is called a *chrysom child;* whence the title in the London bills of mortality. In such a case, it was the beautiful custom amongst our ancestors, perhaps still is so amongst those who have the good feeling to appreciate these time-honoured usages, to bury the innocent creature in its baptismal robe; to which the northern Spaniards (at least in Biscay) add, as another symbol of purity, on the lid of the little coffin,—

"A happy garland of the pure white rose."

How profoundly this mysterious chrism influenced the imaginations of our forefathers, is shown by the multiplied *ricochets* through which it impressed itself upon the vocabulary of the case; the oil, the act of anointing, the little infant anointed, the white robe in which it was dressed, all and each severally bore the name of the *chrysom.*

some other of the typical dresses assumed in different ranks and situations by the primitive Christians.

No. V.—*In the judgments they pass, the Essenes are most accurate and just; nor do they pass sentence by the votes of a court that is lower than a hundred.*—Here we find Josephus unconsciously alluding to the secret arrangements of the early Christian Church, the machinery established for conducting affairs so vast by their tendency, in a condition so critical by its political relations. The *Apostolical Constitutions* show that many of the forms in general councils, long after that age, had been traditionally derived from this infancy of the Christian Church—a result which is natural in any case, but almost inevitable where the original organizers are invested with that sort of honour and authority attached to inspiration. Here are positive traces of the Christian institutions, as viewed by one who knew of their existence under the name of Essenes, and witnessed some of their decisions in the result, but was never admitted to any confidential glimpse of their deliberations, or their system of proceeding, or their principles. Here is the truth, but traced by its shadow. On the other hand, if the pretended Essenes (considered as distinct from Christians) were the people concerned, what need should *they* have of courts—numerous or not numerous? Had the Sadducees courts? Had the Pharisees courts? Doubtless they had, in their general character of Jews, but certainly not in their separate characters as philosophic sects. Here again, therefore, in this very mention of courts, had there been no word dropped of their form, we see an insuperable evidence to the fact of the Christians being the true parties concerned.

No. VI.—The Essenes are divided by Philo-Judæus into the *Therapeutici* and the *Practici.* A division into four orders has already been noticed, in explaining the general

constitution of the society. These orders would very probably have characteristic names as well as barely distinguishing numbers. And if so, the name of *Therapeutæ* would exactly correspond to the *medical* evangelists (the *hakims*) noticed under No. II. We see therefore at once two leading divisions of the new-born Christian sect: 1*st*, the *Therapeutici*, who were intrusted with the propagation of the faith as having special gifts for authorizing crowds, and for winning confidence; 2*d*, the *Practici*, who were intrusted with the private affairs of the brethren. The external interests were confided to the first; the domestic to the second.

No. VII.—*Moreover, the Essenes are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labours on the seventh day; for they even get their food ready on the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day.*—Now then, it will be said, these Essenes, if Christians, ought *not* to have kept the Jewish Sabbath. This seems a serious objection. But pause, reader. One consideration is most important in this whole discussion. The Jews are *now* ranged in hostility to the Christians; because now the very name of Jew makes open proclamation that he has rejected Christianity; but, in the earliest stage of Christianity, the Jew's relation to that new creed was in suspense and undetermined: he might be, 1. in a state of hostility; 2. in a state of transition; 3. in a state of deliberation. So far, therefore, from shocking his prejudices by violent alterations of *form*, and of outward symbol, not essential to the truth symbolized, the error of the early Christians would lie the other way; as in fact we know that it did in Judæa, that is, in the land of the Essenes, where they retained too much rather than too little of Mosaic rites. Judaism is the radix of Christianity: Christianity the integration of

Judaism. And so long as this integration was only *not accepted*, it was reasonable to presume it the subject of examination, and to regard the Jew as a Christian *in transitu*, and by tendency (if not violently disturbed or shocked) as a Christian elect. For one generation the Jews must have been regarded as novices in a lower class advancing gradually to the higher grades; not as enemies at all, but as imperfect allies. During this pacific interim (which is not to be thought hostile, because individual Jews were hostile), the Christians most entangled with Jews, viz., the Christians of Palestine, would not seek to widen the chasm which divided them. On the contrary, they would concede too much to the prejudices of their Jewish brethren; they would adopt too many of the Jewish rites; as at first even circumcision: *à fortiori*, the Jewish Sabbath. Thus it would be during the period of suspense. Hostility would first commence when the two orders of men could no longer be viewed as the inviting and invited —as teaching and learning; but as affirming and denying —as worshippers and blasphemers. Then began the perfect schism of the two orders. Then began amongst the Syrian Christians the observance of a Christian Sunday; then began the general disuse of circumcision.

Here we are called upon to close this investigation; and for the following reason: Most subjects offer themselves under two aspects at the least, often under more. This question, accordingly, upon the true relations of the Essenes, may be contemplated either as a religious question, or as a question of Christian antiquities. Under this latter aspect, it is not improperly entertained by a work whose primary functions are literary. But to pursue it further might entangle us more intricately in speculations of Christian doctrine than could be suitable to any writer not professedly

theological. We pause, therefore; though not for want of abundant matter to continue the discussion.

The Christian religion offers two things: a body of truth, of things to be believed, in the first place; in the second place, a spiritual agency, a mediatorial agency, for carrying these truths into operative life. Otherwise expressed, the Christian religion offers—1st, a knowledge; 2d, a power: that is, 1st, a rudder to guide; 2d, sails to propel. Now mark: the Essenes, as reported to us by Josephus, by Philo-Judæus, or two centuries afterwards by Eusebius, do not appear to have claimed No. 2; and for this reason, because, as a secret society, and for the very cause which made it prudent for them to be a secret society, that part of their pretensions could not have been stated safely; not without avowing the very thing which it was their purpose to conceal, viz., their allegiance to Christ. But as to No. 1—as to the total *truths* taught by Christianity, taken in contradistinction to its spiritual *powers*—these the Essenes *did* claim; these they *did* appropriate; and therefore take notice of this: if the Essenes were not the early Christians in disguise, then was Christianity, *as a knowledge*, taught independently of Christ; nay, in opposition to Christ; or, if we were to accept the hyperbolical fairy-tale of Pliny, positively two thousand years before the era of Christ. On the affirmative assumption all is clear and coherent. Take the negative alternative; suppose the Essenes a distinct body from the primitive Christians of Palestine (*i.e.*, those particular Christians who stood under the ban of Jerusalem), and you have a deadlier wound inflicted on Christian faith than the whole army of infidels ever attempted. A *parhelion*—a secondary sun, a mock sun that should shine for centuries with equal arguments for its own authenticity as existed for the original and authentic sun—would not be

more shocking to the sense and to the auguries of man than a secondary Christianity not less spiritual, not less heavenly, not less divine than the primary, pretending to a separate and even hostile origin. Much more is to be said in behalf of our thesis. But say more or say less—say it well or say it ill—the main argument, that the Essenes were the early Christians, locally in danger, and therefore locally putting themselves, with the wisdom of the serpent, under a cloud of disguise, impenetrable to fierce Jewish enemies and to timid or treacherous brethren,—that argument is essential to the dignity of Christian truth. That theory is involved in the almighty principle that, as there is but one God, but one hope, but one anchorage for man, so also there can be but one authentic faith, but one derivation of truth, but one perfect revelation.

Note to Page 266, line 9.

Epichristian.—This term, introduced to meet a necessity of the case, may be explained thus: That particular age or generation (of twenty or thirty years, suppose) which witnesses the first origin of any great idea, system, discovery, or revelation, rarely indeed witnesses the main struggle and opening rush of its evolution. Exactly as any birth promises vast results for man, it may be expected to slumber and *gather* silently, like what housemaids call *a gathering-coal*, through perhaps one generation. Then suddenly kindling, and spreading by ratios continually accelerated, it rushes into the fulness of life with the hurry of a vernal resurrection in Sweden. Such a secondary generation therefore, supervening upon the very earliest which dates from the first infant germs, is the season of true and virtual birth: but still, according to the *letter* of chronological precedency, it is not so. In order therefore to reconcile the apparent with the substantial truth, I speak of all agencies that belonged to the primary movements of Christianity as *Epichristian*—that is, as essentially forming elements in the original machinery through which that revelation revolved, though generally not coming into mature action until the generation that succeeded.

AELIUS LAMIA.

FOR a period of centuries there has existed an enigma, dark and insoluble as that of the Sphinx, in the text of Suetonius. Isaac Casaubon, as modest as he was learned, had vainly besieged it; then, in a mood of revolting arrogance, Joseph Scaliger; Ernesti; Gronovius; many others; and all without a gleam of success. Had the tread-mill been awarded (as might have been wished) to failure of attempts at solution, under the construction of having traded in false hopes—*in smoke-selling*, as the Roman law entitled it—one and all of these big-wigs must have mounted that aspiring machine of Tantalus, *nolentes volentes.*

The passage in Suetonius which so excruciatingly (but so unprofitably) has tormented the wits of such scholars as have sat in judgment upon it through a period of three hundred and fifty years, arises in the tenth section of his Domitian. That prince, it seems, had displayed in his outset considerable promise of moral excellence; in particular, neither rapacity nor cruelty was then apparently any feature in his character. Both qualities, however, found a pretty large and early development in his advancing career, but cruelty the largest and earliest. By way of illustration, Suetonius rehearses a list of distinguished men, clothed with

senatorian or even consular rank, whom he had put to death upon allegations the most frivolous; amongst them, Aelius Lamia, a nobleman whose wife he had torn from him by open and insulting violence. It may be as well to cite the exact words of Suetonius:* "Aelium Lamiam (interemit) ob suspiciosos quidem, verum et veteres et innoxios jocos; quòd post abductam uxorem laudanti vocem suam—dixerat, *Heu taceo;* quòdque Tito hortanti se ad alterum matrimonium, responderat μὴ καὶ σὺ γαμῆσαι θέλεις;"—*Anglicè*, Aelius Lamia he put to death on account of certain jests; jests liable to some jealousy, but, on the other hand, of old standing, and that had in fact proved harmless as regarded practical consequences—namely, that to one who praised his voice as a singer he had replied, *Heu taceo;* and that, on another occasion, in reply to the Emperor Titus, when urging him to a second marriage, he had said, "What now, I suppose *you* are looking out for a wife?"

The latter jest is intelligible enough, stinging, and in a high degree witty. As if the young men of the Flavian family could fancy no wives but such as they had won by violence from other men, he affects in a bitter sarcasm to take for granted that Titus, in counselling his friends to marry, was simply contemplating the first step towards creating a fund of eligible wives. The primal qualifica-

* The original Latin seems singularly careless: every (even though inattentive) reader says—*Innoxios*, harmless? But if these jests were harmless, how could he call them *suspiciosos*, calculated to rouse suspicion? The way to justify the drift of Suetonius in reconcilement with his precise words is thus—on account of certain repartees which undeniably had borne a sense justifying some uneasiness and jealousy at the time of utterance. but which the event had shown to be practically harmless, whatever had been the intention, and which were now obsolete.

tion of any lady as a consort being in Flavian eyes that she had been torn away violently from a friend, it became evident that the preliminary step towards a Flavian wedding was, to persuade some incautious friend into marrying, and thus putting himself into a capacity of being robbed. Such, at least in the stinging jest of Lamia, was the Flavian rule of conduct. And his friend Titus, therefore, simply as the brother of Domitian, simply as a Flavian, he affected to regard as indirectly and provisionally extending his own conjugal fund, whenever he prevailed on a friend to select a wife.

The latter jest, therefore, when once apprehended, speaks broadly and bitingly for itself. But the other; what can it possibly mean? For centuries has that question been reiterated; and hitherto without advancing by one step nearer to solution. Isaac Casaubon, who about 250 years since was the leading oracle in this field of literature, writing an elaborate and continuous commentary upon Suetonius, found himself unable to suggest any real aids for dispersing the thick darkness overhanging the passage. What he says is this: "Parum satisfaciunt mihi interpretes in explicatione hujus Lamiæ dicti. Nam quod putant *Heu taceo* suspirium esse ejus—indicem doloris ob abductam uxorem magni sed latentis, nobis non ita videtur; sed notatam potius fuisse tyrannidem principis, qui omnia in suo genere pulchra et excellentia possessoribus eriperet, unde necessitas incumbebat sua bona dissimulandi celandique." In English thus:—Not at all satisfactory to me are the commentators in the explanation of the *dictum* (here equivalent to *dicterium*) of Lamia. For, whereas they imagine *Heu taceo* to be a sigh of his—the record and indication of a sorrow, great though concealed, on behalf of the wife that had been violently torn away from him—me, I confess, the case does not

strike in that light; but rather that a satiric blow was aimed at the despotism of the sovereign prince, who tore away from their possessors all objects whatsoever marked by beauty or distinguished merit in their own peculiar class: whence arose a pressure of necessity for dissembling and hiding their own advantages. "*Sic esse exponendum*," that such is the true interpretation (continues Casaubon), "*docent illa verba* [LAUDANTI VOCEM SUAM]" (we are instructed by these words), [to one who praised his singing voice, &c.]

This commentary was obscure enough, and did no particular honour to the native good sense of Isaac Casaubon, usually so conspicuous. For, whilst proclaiming a settlement, in reality it settled nothing. Naturally, it made but a feeble impression upon the scholars of the day; and not long after the publication of the book, Casaubon received from Joseph Scaliger a friendly but gasconading letter, in which that great scholar brought forward a new reading—namely, εὔτακτῳ, to which he assigned a profound technical value as a musical term. No person even affected to understand Scaliger. Casaubon himself, while treating so celebrated a man with kind and considerate deference, yet frankly owned that, in all his vast reading, he had never met with this Greek word in such a sense. But, without entering into any dispute upon that verbal question, and conceding to Scaliger the word and his own interpretation of the word, no man could understand in what way this new resource was meant to affect the ultimate question at issue—namely, the extrication of the passage from that thick darkness which overshadowed it.

"*As you were*" (to speak in the phraseology of military drill), was in effect the word of command. All things reverted to their original condition. And two centuries of

darkness again enveloped this unsolved or insoluble perplexity of Roman literature. The darkness had for a few moments seemed to be unsettling itself in preparation for flight: but immediately it rolled back again; and through seven generations of men this darkness was heavier, because now loaded with disappointment, and in that degree less hopeful than before.

At length then, I believe, all things are ready for the explosion of a catastrophe: "Which catastrophe," I hear some malicious reader whispering, "is doubtless destined to glorify himself" (meaning the unworthy writer of this little paper). I cannot deny it. A truth *is* a truth. And, since no medal, nor riband, nor cross of any known order, is disposable for the most brilliant successes in dealing with desperate (or what may be called *condemned*) passages in pagan literature, mere sloughs of despond that yawn across the pages of many a heathen dog, poet and orator, that I could mention, so much the more reasonable it is that a large allowance should be served out of boasting and self-glorification to all those whose merits upon this field national governments have neglected to proclaim. The Scaligers, both father and son, I believe, acted upon this doctrine; and drew largely by anticipation upon that reversionary bank which they conceived to be answerable for such drafts. Joseph Scaliger, it strikes me, was drunk when he wrote his letter on the present occasion, and in that way failed to see (what Casaubon saw clearly enough) that he had commenced shouting before he was out of the wood. For my own part, if I go so far as to say that the result promises, in the Frenchman's phrase, "to cover me with glory," I beg the reader to remember that the idea of "covering" is of most variable extent: the glory may envelop one in a voluminous robe, a princely mantle that may require a long suite of

train-bearers, or may pinch and vice one's arms into that succinct garment (now superannuated) which some eighty years ago drew its name from the distinguished Whig family in England of Spencer.

All being now ready, and the arena being cleared of competitors (for I suppose it is fully understood that everybody but myself has retired from the contest), let it be clearly understood what it is that the contest turns upon. Supposing that one had been called, like Œdipus of old, to a turn-up with that venerable girl the Sphinx, most essential it would have been that the clerk of the course (or however you designate the judge, the umpire, &c.) should have read the riddle propounded, how else judge of the solution? At present the elements of the case to be decided stand thus :—

A Roman noble, a man in fact, of senatorial rank, has been robbed, robbed with violence, and with cruel scorn, of a lovely young wife, to whom he was most tenderly attached. But by whom? the indignant reader demands. By a younger son* of the Roman Emperor Vespasian.

* But holding what rank, and what precise station, at the time of the outrage? At this point I acknowledge a difficulty. The criminal was in this case Domitian, the younger son of the tenth Cæsar, viz., of Vespasian; *2dly*, younger brother of Titus, the eleventh Cæsar; and himself, *3dly*, under the name of Domitian, the twelfth of the Cæsars. Now the difficulty lies here, which yet I have never seen noticed in any book: was this violence perpetrated before or after Domitian's assumption of the purple? If *after*, how, then, could the injured husband have received that advice from Titus (as to repairing his loss by a second marriage), which suggested the earliest *bon mot* between Titus and Lamia? Yet again, if not after but before how was it that Lamia had not invoked the protection of Vespasian, or of Titus—the latter of whom enjoyed a theatrically fine reputation for equity and moderation? By the way, another *bon mot* arose out of this brutal Domitian's evil reputation. He had a taste for petty

For some years the wrong has been borne in silence: the sufferer knew himself to be powerless as against such an oppressor; and that to show symptoms of impotent hatred was but to call down thunderbolts upon his own head. Generally, therefore, prudence had guided him. *Patience* had been the word; *silence*, and below all the deep, deep word, *watch and wait!* It is, however, an awful aggravation of such afflictions, that the lady herself might have co-operated in the later stages of the tragedy with the purposes of the imperial ruffian. Lamia had been suffered to live, because as a living man he yielded up into the hands of his tormentor his whole capacity of suffering; no part of it escaped the hellish range of his enemy's eye. But this advantage for the torturer had also its weak and doubtful side. Use and monotony might secretly be wearing away the edge of the organs on and through which the corrosion of the inner heart proceeded. And when that point was reached—a callousness which neutralized the further powers of the tormentor, it then became the true policy of such a fiend (as being his one sole unexhausted resource) to inflict death. On the whole, therefore, putting together the facts of the case, it seems to have been resolved that he should die. But previously that he should drink

cruelties; especially upon the common house-fly, which in the Syrian mythology enjoys the condescending patronage of the god Belzebub. Flies did Cæsar massacre in spite of Belzebub by bushels; and the carnage was the greater, because this Apollyon of flies was always armed; since the metallic *stylus*, with which the Roman ploughed his waxen tablets in writing memoranda, was the best of weapons in a pitched battle with a fly; in fact, Cæsar had an unfair advantage. Meantime this habit of his had become notorious: and one day a man, wishing for a private audience, inquired in the antechambers if Cæsar were alone? *Quite alone*, was the reply. "Are you sure? Is nobody with him." *Nobody: not so much as a fly* (*ne musca quidam*).

off a final cup of anguish, the bitterest that had yet been offered. The lady herself, again, had she also suffered in sympathy with her martyred husband? That must have been known to a certainty in the outset of the case by him that knew too profoundly on what terms of love they had lived. Possibly to resist indefinitely might have menaced herself with ruin, whilst offering no benefit to her husband. There is besides this dreadful fact, placed ten thousand times on record, that the very goodness of the human heart in such a case ministers fuel to the moral degradation of a female combatant. Any woman, and exactly in proportion to the moral sensibility of her nature, finds it painful to live in the same house with a man not odiously repulsive in manners or in person on terms of eternal hostility. What it was circumstantially that passed, long since has been overtaken and swallowed up by the vast oblivions of time. This only survives—namely, that what Lamia had said gave signal offence in the highest quarter was not forgotten, and that his death followed eventually. But what was it that he *did* say? That is precisely the question, and the whole question which we have to answer. At present we know, and we do *not* know, what it was that he said. We find bequeathed to us by history the munificent legacy of two words—involving eight letters—which in their present form, with submission to certain grandees of classic literature, more particularly to the scoundrel Joe Scaliger (son of the old original ruffian, J. C. Scaliger), mean exactly nothing. These two words must be regarded as the raw material upon which we have to work: and out of these we are required to turn out a rational, but also, be it observed, a memorably caustic saying for Aelius Lamia, under the following five conditions: First, it must allude to his wife, as one that is lost to him irrecoverably;

secondly, it must glance at a gloomy tyrant who bars him from rejoining her; thirdly, it must reply to the compliment which had been paid to the sweetness of his own voice; fourthly, it should in strictness contain some allusion calculated not only to irritate, but even to alarm or threaten his jealous and vigilant enemy, else how was it suspicious? fifthly, doing all these things, it ought also to absorb, as its own main elements, the eight letters contained in the present senseless words—"*Heu taceo.*"

Here is a monstrous quantity of work to throw upon any two words in any possible language. Even Shakspere's clown,* when challenged to furnish a catholic answer applicable to all conceivable occasions, cannot do it in less than nine letters, namely, *Oh lord, sir!* I, for my part, satisfied that the existing form of *Heu taceo* was mere indictable and punishable nonsense, but yet that this nonsense must enter as chief-element into the stinging sense of Lamia, gazed for I cannot tell how many weeks (weeks, indeed! say years), at these impregnable letters, viewing them sometimes as a fortress that I was called upon to escalade, sometimes as an anagram that I was called upon to re-organize into the life which it had lost through some dislocation of arrangement. One day I looked at it through a microscope; next day I looked at it from a distance through a telescope. Then I reconnoitred it downwards from the top round of a ladder; then upwards, in partnership with Truth, from the bottom of a well. Finally, the result in which I landed, and which fulfilled all the conditions laid down, was this: Let me premise, however, what *at any rate* the existing darkness attests, that some disturbance of the text must in some way have arisen; whether from the gnawing of a rat, or the spilling of some

* See *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act ii. Scene 2.

obliterating fluid at this point of some unique MS. It is sufficient for us that the vital word has survived I suppose, therefore, that Lamia had replied to the friend who praised the sweetness of his voice, "Sweet, is it? Ah, would to Heaven it might prove so sweet as to be even Orpheutic!" Ominous in this case would be the word Orpheutic to the ears of Domitian; for every schoolboy knows that this means a *wife revoking voice.* Let me remark that there is such a legitimate word as *Orpheutaceam;* and in that case the Latin repartee of Lamia would stand thus: *Suavem dixisti? Quam vellem et Orpheutaceam* But, perhaps, reader, you fail to recognise in this form our old friend *Heu taceo.* But here he is to a certainty, in spite of the rat: and in a different form of letters the compositor will show him up to you as—*vellem et Orp* [HEU TACEAM]. Here, then, shines out at once—(1) Eurydice the lovely wife; (2) detained by the gloomy tyrant Pluto; (3) who, however, is forced into surrendering her to her husband, whose voice (the sweetest ever known) drew stocks and stones to follow him, and finally his wife; (4) the word Orpheutic involves, therefore, an alarming threat, showing that the hope of recovering the lady still survived; (5) we now find involved in the restoration all the eight, or perhaps nine, letters of the erroneous (and for so long a time unintelligible) form.

END OF NINTH VOLUME

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views, according to one of which you are to form your scheme of conduct; on the one hand, a mystery in the divine government, a permission infinitely inexplicable to you; and on the other, the most glaring manifestation of the quality of the thing so permitted, as hateful in itself and in the sight of God. Consider from which of these two it is the most rational for you to take your rule of action; from that where your understanding is profoundly lost, or from that where all is demonstration or self-evidence. You have light given you on the nether tract where you are placed, beneath the awful mystery in the heaven above, which interposes darkness between you and the reasons and counsels of the Almighty. By this light you have an infallible manifestation of the infinitely odious nature of an object that stands before you. What can this light and this manifestation be for, but that you might not have need to look up into the darkness for an authority, from reasons unknown, to determine your sentiments and action? And is it rational, and can it be safe, that the clear evidence which has thus been given, in order to define for you a scheme of duty with the advantage of being independent of the mystery, should be rejected that you may revert to that very mystery for a determination of your duty,—or rather for an authority to conclude that you have none? Or would you, both despising this light and defying that darkness, aspire to surmount the region of mystery itself, ascend into the light around the throne of heaven, and, sharer of Sovereign Intelligence, enter into God's own reasons for permitting the evil? But even *that* transcendent illumination would not authorize the principle of action that because God suffers the continuance of an evil, *you* shall abstain from hostility against it. For there would be a further expansion for that light

to reach, namely, an understanding also of his reasons for *requiring* from his rational creatures an active enmity to all evil, notwithstanding his sufferance of it, and an apprehension of the consistency between that requirement and that sufferance. Your presuming, therefore, in contempt of that consistency, and on a pretence of homage to one part of his reasons to contravene another part of them,—that part from which his injunction proceeds, — would be a flagrant impiety; and would convict you of a virtual alliance with the evil to which those reasons and that injunction could not move your hostility.

But perhaps you will say, that far from any tendency to such an alliance, you are, as an indispensable part and proof of your fidelity to God, a mortal foe of this foe to him, in every estimate of your judgment and every sentiment of your heart; and that the only exemption sought, on the plea of the divine permission of the evil, is, that you may be excused, at least for the present, from active measures that would but expend and waste your feeble strength, on that which the almighty strength spares.

Now in the first place, there seems to be a groundless assumption implied here, namely the *continuance* of this permission indefinitely into futurity; whereas, for any thing that can be known to you, hostile means put in action at this period may coincide with a divine decree to hasten the termination of that mysterious sufferance: and then, whatever were the natural inadequacy of those means, they would seem to have caught the fire of Gideon's lamps, and be made to flame out with supernatural power of rout and confusion to the host of pagan gods.

But in the next place, you cannot consistently acknowledge that the circumstance of the divine permis-

sion of this dreadful system of delusion affords no particle of ground for conciliation to it, but leaves you under the full obligation of a mortal enmity,—and at the same time claim from that circumstance an exemption from practical efforts against it. What indeed is its permission but simply its existence?—in virtue of which there can be no exemption from the duty of attacking it which would not be equally an exemption from all duty whatever in the form of opposition and conflict; which therefore would not confer an universal inviolability on evil, and end practically in the maxim, that the more evil there is in the world, the less there is for the servants of God to do. And yet you are saying, their *feeling*, in this state of exemption, should be the same as if they *had* a great deal to do, and a mighty host to fight. While, with respect at least to the giant evil at present in view, you would plead that they may remain in inaction, they ought nevertheless, you will say, to glow with the actuating principle. But then of what use is that principle except to disturb their repose? That they should be inflamed, as you acknowledge they should, against what is working infinite mischief and misery to a large portion of the human race, and yet should in point of action remain at peace with it, would not only be an inconsistency and absurdity, but would also be an uneasy and mortifying state. Vain passion of christian zeal! illusory and almost penal fire from heaven! animating the heart but to consume it, if there should be no practical mode and machinery for conveying outward its energy to strike against the hated object. To have the mind beset and filled, as by main force, with the revolting images of pagan abominations, and to know that this infernal usurpation triumphs in the slavery of millions of our common family, and yet, the while, to submit to

be unfurnished with expedients of devout revenge ; to have no arrows, no power of throwing reflected convergent sunbeams, no missiles charged with the elements most noxious to a malignant nature; would be felt as a hard *imposition* by a man of zeal, who would dread to have his soul, in reference to the service of God, in the condition of a hero in chains. What shall we think, then, of a servant of God desiring as an *exemption* and a *privilege* to be allowed thus to expend away the vital force of his spirit without action? We cannot believe that he *has* any of that zealous emotion which he pretends. No, you must not profess to feel and fulfil a duty of enmity in spirit against the permitted evil, and at the same time acknowledge no duty of offensive exertion. The true animosity would be so intent on some means of action, that it is certain the state of feeling which persuades to decline such means is far too placable toward what is insulting God and destroying man.

But it is still more plainly to our purpose, as against this religious fatalism, to allege the matter of fact, that though it has been the mysterious will of the Supreme Governor to permit such great evils in the earth, it has as evidently been his will to maintain, in his own proceedings, a continual war against them. Why have there been so many vindictive interpositions of his among the inhabitants of the world ? Let the memorials of cities, and tribes, and nations, and in one instance a world, destroyed, testify whether he has set men the example of peace with irreligion and iniquity. What is the inscription on the monuments of beings that his vengeance has smitten ? What has been the interpretation required to be put on all the formidable signs held out to deter, and all the plagues that have followed when those signs warned in vain ? The victims of

those plagues, and the witnesses of their infliction, could not say that the denunciations had been lying signs and oracles, in demanding to be heard as heaven's protest against the evils to which the will of man had been permitted to abandon him.

Thus we have the *action* of the Divine Being giving a rule for that of his rational subjects, in respect to the moral evil that infests the world ; or rather impressing an awful sanction on the laws in which he has commanded their resistance to it. Each of these commands is against something which his unsearchable wisdom has withheld his omnipotence from preventing or instantly exterminating. But his servants are to obey in silence. Well indeed might they feel an alarming sentiment at hearing so very many things recounted for them to be committed in deadly strife against ; but what would be the piety, or the prudence, or the consequence, of a remonstrance to him against so severe a vocation, on the plea that himself had permitted, and could have prevented, every thing that he was thus imperatively involving them in painful conflict with over every step of ground till they should fall into the grave ?

We repeat, that the whole course of the extraordinary divine interference among men has been in the direction, and has commanded human spirits, on their allegiance, to concur in the direction, which we are endeavouring to give to your zeal. In visions and oracles sent to patriarchs ; in deliverances and avenging judgments ; in the miraculous suspensions of the laws of nature ; in institutions of religion ; in the illuminations of prophets and apostles ; in the excitement of the best men to the most invincible pertinacity of warfare ; in the mission of angels ; and, transcendently above all, in the " manifestation of the Son of God to

destroy the works of the Devil,"—in all these forms of the divine dispensation, and in all the operation that has been in progress from them to this hour, one spirit breathes, one perpetual emanation of divine will and agency against that which will, nevertheless, be permitted to retain, but with lessening power, an existence on the earth till a very late period, when the "Lord shall consume it with the breath of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming."—Such has been the spirit of all the Divine Intervention. The sun is not more conspicuous by his own light, than this character of the religious economy.

Now then for a professed servant of God to refuse acting in conformity to this entire tendency of his cause, and to justify himself on the ground of the divine permission of that which the cause is directed against, what is it but, in effect, to say to the Supreme Governor,—I behold two views of thy government; there is thy sufferance of an awful array and amount of evils; and there is a system of thy dispensations constituted to work in most direct and absolute opposition to them. The impossibility of apprehending the unity of principle of these contrasted parts of thy government throws a dark mystery on the one of them. But with me, unlike my fellow-mortals, the mystery rests on the latter view, on the economy of interpositions, enactments, and mandates for resistance to the evil; whereas the reason for its permission is so plain to me, that I can, in dissent from all thy faithful servants since the world began, adopt it as my rule of conduct. In pursuance of this adoption, I dare to believe thou art, in truth, *not* so much the enemy of this same Evil, as is pretended, even in thy own revelation; and that I shall, upon a certain secret understanding, please thee fully as well by declining to join in a

attack upon it, as by devoting to the utmost my active forces to cooperate against it, in a war which I do at the same time perceive clearly that thou thyself, for what reason of state I cannot conjecture, hast raised and maintained with a palpable and continual interference.

Let us suppose him to act in this spirit toward his own soul. When he looks there, he sees there is a proportion, a lamentable one, of "that abominable thing" which has rendered the world so horrid a scene. But the Almighty power has *permitted* its existence there. What then? Can he on that account remain quiet, while it is poisoning the essence of his being, and feel as if it were a homage to God to second, if we may so express it, that permission? With plain sad proof of the very active quality of the malignant infester, which seems also to become, even while he is looking at it, (if under a suspension of resistance,) sensibly stronger, by the force of a principle of augmentation altogether indefinite if left to its own action, and which tells him, as with a demon's voice, that his soul is the intended victim, can he calmly contemplate this permitted state and operation, just as an inexplicable phenomenon of the divine government? And if he were to pretend reverential submission, what manner of god could he deem himself adoring, that would be pleased with such a sacrifice? Unless his pretensions to religion are false, and his soul is actually surrendering to perdition, he will, at the sight of this mournful predicament of his own spirit, be ardently intent on an application of the means of resisting the destroyer. And he will be at once alarmed and indignant if he should perceive his mind admitting, under some influence of the consideration that God has not prevented the pernicious fact of sin within him, any slighter estimate of the required energy and promptitude of

the resistance, than that which should be commensurate to the evil itself, viewed absolutely, in all its atrocity and activity.

But now let him revert to the heathen slaves of darkness and sin.—If it would be cruelty to his own soul, to make the lighter of the invasion, or the means of expulsion, of its deadly enemy, because God has not precluded nor exterminated it, he may be reminded, and all the friends of christianity may be reminded, of the obligation implied in the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Try once more how strongly you can bring upon your minds the reality of an immense multitude of spirits, of your own nature, existing on a remote continent. You can by an effort of thought come to as realizing a sense of being placed amidst the countenances, the vital warmth, the talk, the worship, the infelicities, of people at the distance of some thousands of leagues, as of the inhabitants of an adjacent part of your own country. With as absolute an assurance of fact as if you were at this hour in India, and were just now descrying a tyger crouching to spring on one ill-fated person, or a serpent throwing its folds round another, you can behold the prodigiously numerous tribe of actual living immortal essences, images and counterparts of your own, as it were watched for, fascinated, sprung upon, grappled, by things arisen in fearful eruption from the bottomless pit. Look at them involved in the power of the Old Serpent.—If we might enforce the representation by a simile, suppose the case, that a professedly benevolent man sojourning in that country, happened to be in a spot where he saw a tyger, eyeing with deadly glare the intended but unapprehensive victim, or a serpent in the very act of contracting itself to dart on an un-

warned human object; and suppose, too, that this spectator had an advantage of position which exempted him from danger, and also that he had in his hands the most efficient means for striking the monster with death or sudden fright; or that at the very least he could alarm the person in peril. Now what sort of philanthropist shall we represent if we next suppose, that, while looking at this creature of living flesh and blood, who is perhaps approaching every instant nearer the spot where death is lurking, he coolly thinks what a hopeless and fearful plight; muses why the God of nature should suffer beasts of prey and serpents in a world made for man; takes time, if there *be* time, for the conclusion that, at all events, since God *does* suffer them, men must of course be devoured by them; and so, quietly awaits and witnesses the catastrophe, highly self-complacent, perhaps, in the sort of selfish piety with which he goes away blessing the Providence which had not doomed *him* to be the victim.

We need not make the application. We will only suggest whether, since the whole accountableness for all the error and wickedness of paganism must rest somewhere, the alleviation obtained before the Supreme Judge by the heathens who have been denied the means of deliverance from so wretched a condition, may not be at the expense of those who shall have refused to try those means upon them; and then whether, in the solemn time of adjudgment, these latter will dare to reflect off this accountableness for omission on the Judge himself, in the allegation that the evil was of his own permission,—when they will have the consciousness that he gave them means of at least attempting its destruction.

This torpedo kind of fatalism, from the dominion of

which we should be glad to see the active powers of all good men rescued, may somewhat change its tone; still, however, aiming to elude the requisition to come forth in the activity of the cause. It may affect to recover from the kind of hopeless dead prostration of feeling at the awful fact of God's permission of so dreadful an evil, into adoration of his power as almighty to destroy it. And how magnificently that power shall be glorified, and how emphatically man shall be degraded, when it is hoped that some exemption from service may be suborned from the contrast! Feelings of indolence combined with ideas of the sovereignty of God will form a state of mind prolific of such reflections as these: Of what consequence can be the trivial efforts of such insignificant creatures, as cooperating or not with the energy of an almighty power? What signify, in a great process of nature, some few rain-drops or dew-drops the more or the less? What are we, to be talking, in strains of idle pomp, of converting the people of half a world? How reduced to contempt, how vanishing from perception, will be the effects of all our petty toils, when mightier powers shall come into action; as the footsteps of insects and birds are effaced and lost under the trample of elephants. Were it not even temerity to affect to take the course where the chariot of Omnipotence is to drive; as if we would intrude to share the achievements proper to a God, or fancy that something magnificent which he has to do, will not be done unless we are there? No, let our text be, as best becomes the humility of mortals and sinners, "Be still, and know that I am God." If he wills the conversion of the heathen nations, he has such powers and means for accomplishing his purpose, as may well allow a sabbath to the hands of all his servants, while their souls

may adore him in his triumphs.—All very true; and so in the literal warfare referred to in scripture cited at the beginning of our discourse, there were means of overthrowing the heathen invaders without the assistance of the people of Meroz, or any other people; for the stars in their courses were to fight against Sisera. It was not because he *needed* them for combatants, that the God of armies had required their presence in battle.—After what has been already said of the employment of feeble means to produce a triumphantly disproportionate effect, it is superfluous to make any other answer to this indolence, or indifference, or pride, or all of them together, pleading under the semblance of humble piety, than an admonitory suggestion, that, as it has been hitherto God's usual method to employ human instrumentality in his great works of beneficence, his now declining to do so would but be the alarming expression of his judgment, that the human agents are now not worth being employed on earth, nor being translated to heaven. Well might a dread of the fatal privilege of exemption under such a judgment suppress the disposition to seek, and the willingness to accept, such a privilege on any ground whatever.

The religious fatalism, in a still further modification, somewhat distinguishable from these preceding descriptions, will make professions of anticipating with great delight the certain accomplishment of the glorious revolution in question, *when God's selected time shall arrive.* Then, too, as in former great changes, there will be noble work, and enough of it, for such humble instruments as men to perform: meanwhile, beware of premature attempts, and wait for the signs that the time is come. Language like this has been within the memory of many of you, among the common-places of our christian communities. If there be still some

cautious christians who cannot willingly let it grow obsolete, we might ask them whether they have exactly figured in their minds in what manner the expected grand process is to begin, or what appearances they could accept, as signs that the period is come when their efforts would not be like a vain attempt to constrain the fulfilment of a divine purpose before its appointed time. Are there to be extraordinary meteors, significantly passing eastward as they vanish? Are they to hear that the temples of Seeva are sunk suddenly in ruins at the stroke of thunder? Or, still more of prodigy, are all the chief statesmen, and mercantile men, and military men, especially concerned in the affairs of the east, to become with one accord inspired with a fervent zeal for the christianizing of Asia, perhaps impelled literally to a spiritual crusade against Hindoo idolatry?

Perhaps they will, after all, disclaim the expectation of any extraordinary signals from heaven, when it occurs to them that they are in danger of the impiety of demanding a *specific* change in God's manner of declaring his mind to men. And probably they will profess that they wait for no other tokens than such as may afford a rational presumption, according to the rules of judgment commonly admitted amongst wise men. Then we may venture to ask why they should not accept, as something like the required signs, certain of the circumstances that have attended, thus far, this christian enterprise in India. Is it to be taken as a rebuke from Heaven, on a rash anticipation of Heaven's designs, that our missionaries have been kept in their positions and their work with a general impunity and freedom, notwithstanding that during many years of the time there prevailed against them a systematic unrelenting hostility of spirit, in authorities which in all

human appearance might have crushed them in a moment, and were subject to no visible cause of restraint on their will,—a preservation reminding us of that of Daniel in the lions' den? Or, that the inactivity of fanatic malice, and the considerable favour, experienced among the natives, have seemed to betray some divine coercion put for their sake on the lions and the furies of direct paganism itself, to the disappointment of the *christian* paganism? Or, that they have been preserved in the excellence of the christian character in a scene presenting many temptations to forfeit the distinction, and while bearing the moral responsibility of an undertaking in which that forfeiture would have been fatal? Or, that by the multiplicity and extent of their labours and attainments they are sometimes recalling to our imagination the hundred-handed giant of fable? Or, that between the produce of their own exertions and the supplies from the religious public, pecuniary means have never failed for the constantly enlarging prosecution of the design,—even a very great disaster having operated as if the fall of an edifice should bring a concealed treasure of gold to light?* Or, that while the sacred scriptures have been spreading with rapidity among the nations of the East, the undertaking which has given them this range of mischief to the gods, has produced several marked benefits in our religious societies at home; especially in the point of helping to break up, by the introduction of so many new subjects connected with religion, the *monotony* which too much prevailed in their religious services, topics, and feelings?

What is the interpretation which our soothsayers of

* Alluding to the fire which, some years since, reduced to ashes the printing office at Serampore, with its large literary stores and other materials for the service of the mission.

the colder religious climate put on these signs, conjoined, as we are gratified to view them conjoined, with the enlarging missionary exertions and successes of our brethren of other religious denominations? Or will they sagely observe to us that, in the great concourse of casualties it is at any time possible enough for a sanguine spirit to descry and bring into conjunction a number of things which may be delusively converted into intimations, that a favourite project of its own is also the intention of Heaven? When they have said this, they may consider whether they should not, in their solicitous veneration for Heaven's appointment of times and seasons, abet the gods and their priests in an appeal to the Lord of the world against these missionary intruders, as guilty of insubordination to *Him*, in having presumed to "come to torment *them* before the time."

It has been the lot of several of the persons who have believed themselves to be obeying the will of the Supreme Authority, by leaving this country in prosecution of the christian enterprise in Hindoostan, to die in the service. They had devoted themselves so to die, and rejoiced in the confidence that they were also devoted by a superior decree. In what manner may we believe that their departing spirits have been received by their great Master? Has it been *qualified* "Well done, good and faithful servant," that they have heard?—as if he should say,—Feeble in judgment, rash in temperament, but honest in intention, you are pardoned through a peculiar extension of mercy; and are admitted now to a state of illumination in which you may cultivate the humility that was so defective on earth, and see, in the progressive disclosure of your Lord's designs, how long his servants ought to have repressed the presumptuous forwardness of their zeal.

No, this could not be their reception in a world where they were soon to be joined by the first-fruits of that very zeal, those converts from idolatry who, subsequently to some of their teachers, have died in the faith of Christ; and carried demonstrative living proof to heaven, that the true religion had not in a premature and officious zeal been conveyed sooner than the divine appointment had commissioned it to go, sooner than the divine power was ready to accompany it, to a region whither some of its professed friends would not have contributed to send it. And if we may imagine the nature of the emotion in the great assembly, at the arrival of these spirits from the dominions of idolatry, we shall not believe it to have been the repressed felicitation which should welcome them as but solitary exceptions to a destiny, regarded as still permanently to abide on the immense division of the human race whence they came. Repressed, we say; for we could not conceive of an unmingled delight in receiving them as translated thither chiefly to exemplify that sovereignty of God which he will manifest in every department of his government, by suspending in rare, and only rare instances, his most general appointments; as two individuals have been exempted from the general law of mortality. The sentiment without which the joy would be languid, must have been that which should hail them as signs that a decreed change of dispensation, a new aspect of the divine sovereignty, is beginning or approaching to shine on a dark hemisphere of the world; that death is becoming incomparably more tributary to heaven; and that the ancient barrier between the realms of Asia and the kingdom of eternal glory is beginning to break down.

This indulgence of thought in representing to ourselves the feelings experienced in an invisible and

superior world, is quite within the just range of our contemplation of the subject. It is a noble distinction of religion, that (once admitted as true) it affords a rational substance to bear out the most imaginative exercise of thought. It is a ground on which our ideal excursions may venture, without offence to reason, such a length as they could not on inferior subjects without abandonment to poetical extravagance or mere vanity. It verifies to us as a reality a solemn relation between us and another economy of existence; and constitutes a vital intermedium through which we have the sense of a real interest in beings and a state beyond the sphere of this world. Thus religion, believed and felt, is the amplitude of our moral and intellectual nature. And how wretched an object therefore is a mind, especially of thought, sensibility, and genius, condemned to that poverty and insulation which infidelity inflicts, by annihilating around it the medium of a sensible interest in the existence, the emotions, the activities, of a higher order of beings! Our Lord tells us of great and happy intelligences in the invisible world who rejoice over a sinner when he repents. It is quite rational, then, to have indulged our imagination for a moment in ideas of the reception, in that scene, of those first converts from paganism, in the course of our Mission, who have been followed in death by some of the persons whose labours were crowned with this success. And we are especially warranted in the most vivid imagination which it is possible to form, of the emotions of these proclaimers and these converts of the truth, in their mutual recognition, when thus reunited and in communion with the preceding believers, apostles, and confessors. If but a comparatively faint apprehension of the emphasis of those congratulations could be brought, by some momentary illapse,

on the souls of the most neutral or even the most hostile spectators of the attempt which has been the cause of such emotions in the happiest society, might it not instantly turn to grief at the thought that those felicities had owed none of that rapture to *them?*

And let us remind those professed christians, whose coldness toward a great project of evangelization would justify itself under a plea of reverently awaiting the disclosure of the divine purposes, that by their profession they aspire to join ere long that company to which departed missionaries and their converts have been added. It may be the destination of some of them to leave this world at nearly the time appointed for the removal by death of other of these indefatigable labourers, and of their proselytes. In the reflections which may be excited by such an idea, will there be no sentiment partaking of apprehension? No mortifying anticipation arises at the thought of entering the other world in company with an angelic being, the different rank of his nature precluding all comparison, or all painful humiliation at the difference if comparison were made. But methinks there is something to cause great displacency, and even a degree of intimidation, in the thought of approaching the most illustrious society in the universe in the company of spirits of our own nature and our own times, trained under nearly similar privileges and instructions, or possibly the very same, but who through superior zeal shall have left us in a great disparity. Think whether it be possible that, even on the passage to the superior kingdom, there might be an unwelcome sense of contrast. Supposing the transition to be contemporary and mutually witnessed, it were inevitable there should be a perception of a signal difference, between those passing from the conclusion of a course of devoted enterprise to extend the king-

dom of their Lord into the regions of inveterate cruel superstition, by efforts whose commencing success is attested by redeemed spirits of heathens gone before or accompanying them,—and those persons who, though having been in circumstances little different from theirs in early life, and having professed the same devotedness to the christian cause, shall yet be conscious of having scarcely made an effort for its advancement; of hardly having given their cordial good wishes to this undertaking in its service; of even having, possibly, been almost pleased that the small number, as yet, of conversions from heathenism should seem to afford some advantage to the imputers of enthusiasm to the project. May not the thought of the feelings possible to be excited at such a time by such a contrast, suggest to christians whose faculties seem more readily applicable to the exercise of finding objections to animated schemes of christian experiment, than to that of devising means for their success, a new topic for solicitude and perhaps for prayer, namely, that they may be permitted to enter the superior state in a way that shall not immediately bring them in communication or comparison with their brethren ascending from the war against idolatry?

We may be allowed, at the least, to suggest, that in order to be entirely free from the anticipation of any reflections, tending to throw a shade over the joy of passing into the great Master's presence at nearly the same time as those devoted spirits, there must be the testimony of conscience that *in some other manner* his service is zealously prosecuted. The man indifferent or opposed to the enterprise in which these men are to die, but who yet professes to take an interest in the advancement of religion, and the general good, can

avoid the apprehensiveness of such a future comparison only by having evidence to himself that, though projects which seem to him to partake somewhat of enthusiasm are not exactly adapted to seize his mind, he is diligently intent on promoting the cause of God in plainer, less adventurous, and let him call them, if he will, soberer methods. But, in truth, experience is not in favour of our expecting a very active zeal for extending christianity in *any*, even the ordinary methods, from those who are prompt to impute enthusiasm to the extraordinary ones.

For ourselves, when we think of those who are thus appointed to fall in the immediate conflict with the powers of paganism, shall we not earnestly desire and pray, that we may be so animated to promote the christian cause in *every* practicable way, that we may never have reason to wish, as what would have saved us from any such pain of a close comparison at the time of going to the great account, that these men, instead of being our contemporaries, and fellow-countrymen, and neighbours, no more privileged originally than ourselves, had been in the number of those distinguished agents in the christian service of other times and countries, whom we can look at and venerate in the distance of history, without having our attention and conscience so directly forced on a comparative estimate between them and ourselves?

To return, but for one moment, to the repressive influence on some good men's principles of action and hope, from the idea of the sovereignty of the divine appointments, we may observe, that the most assured belief in the divine decrees, as comprehending all things, has not *necessarily* the effect of paralyzing the

active powers. There is no denying that such is its tendency in cold, inanimate, indolent spirits, that are really indifferent to the objects demanding their exertion. And so with respect to *any* doctrine of religious or moral truth, there is a possible state of mind which is apt to take from it an injurious impression. But let there be an earnest interest about the objects in question, and then the zeal and activity will be incited rather than repressed by the faith in all-comprehending and absolute decrees. Accordingly it has been, we think, for the greater proportion, by decided predestinarians, that the most ardent and efficient exertions of religious innovation have been made upon the inveterate evils of the world. That they were not checked and chilled by this article of their faith, is the least that their conduct testified of its effect. Not only were they not withheld from driving impetuously against the hated thing before them by any surmise whether it might not, for the present, be guarded invisibly by the shield of a decree. Not only did they dart their weapons, when the enemy appeared to be within their reach, without being stopped by any suspicion of an optical deception in this seeming nearness, this possibility of striking it. This is only supposing them not to be *the less* energetic in consequence of their predestinarian faith ; it is what they might be, supposing them the while to *forget* it. But it was not as forgetting their principle, and being actuated, for the time, solely by the independent force of different ones, that they so nobly exerted themselves. No, they acted in the full recollection of it, as a source of invigoration no less indispensable than for Antæus to touch the earth. It was in the element of this doctrine of decrees that they felt their impetus the mightier, their weapons the sharper, their aim the surer.

And while their opponents in belief might be wondering at the phenomenon of such a glow of life, and play of strength, in an element which they had been constantly pronouncing the most mephitic in the whole world of opinion to moral energy, the persons on whom the faith had this influence could have shown how explicable and how far from absurd was such a practical effect, in the case of men in the prosecution of plans for the destruction of what was opposed to the kingdom of God. The first consideration in the matter was the trite and general one,—they were certain that the Almighty will make very great use of human agents in what remains of the course of his dispensations in this world. Next, whatever concealment may rest on the precise nature of his more special determinations, which constitute, so to speak, the divisible portions of his one grand design, there can be no question, with believers in revelation, whether that grand design be a progressive demolition of the dreadful tyranny of evil over the human race. Now *that* was what *they* were intent upon; and they were putting themselves directly into his hands as willing instruments to be applied to that use. And was it not (they thought) most reasonable to entertain a general assurance that willing agents, offered to him for a purpose which he is determined to accomplish, would have their appointment for effective service? If so many would be required that even repugnant or undesigning ones would be made to contribute and cooperate, by his constraining and over-ruling Providence, the willing and zealous ones might in all reason be sure of being put to such an use. The disposition itself was inspired, they thought, for the very purpose of adapting them, and the adaptation given with the intention of employing

them. Thus, on the certainty of their coincidence with God's intention, considered generally, they justified a confidence that they had a *general* appointment to do something in his great work,—an appointment, that is to say, to promote it *in some way or other.*

But no man who is powerfully actuated can stop in generals. Those devout predestinarians, those *genuine* adorers of the God of decrees, were earnestly attentive to the manner in which his general and comprehensive design was seen, in his revelation, resolving itself into defined parts, and taking the form of several great purposes, distinguishable from one another, while all combined in the entire design. Of these several purposes, thus distinguished and announced, there was probably one which was of a nature more specially to interest their feelings, and draw to this particular direction the zeal and cooperation which were in devoted readiness to coincide with the divine intentions as regarded generally. And when they felt their general coincidence of spirit thus determined to one marked division of the divine plan, they acquired a still more animated assurance of their appointment to a practicable and successful service, in proportion as they thus came more distinctly to see *how* they might cooperate in that design.

Nor was this all; for when they thus saw one particular part of the scheme of the divine intention manifested with considerable definiteness, they felt an irresistible tendency to make it more definite still, by resolving this also into particulars. For example; if revelation has declared the destruction of superstition to be one leading object comprehended in the great general intention, their zeal has impelled them to regard this declaration as bearing with special emphasis on those

particular forms of superstition which they were most intent on destroying. Those particular forms, they have said, so eminently hateful, cannot but be very marked objects of the exterminating intention of the supreme will. It has seemed to these men as if the whole force of the general decree were converging to strike just where *they* wished to strike. And as the principle of destruction is to be conveyed through the means of human agents, who so likely to be employed, they said, as we that are already on fire to destroy? Beyond all doubt it is exactly here that we have our decreed and unalterable allotment. Exactly here it is, that our will and the supreme will coalesce to a purpose which therefore defies all chance and all created power.

But their assurance that their intention, as fixed on a particular selected object, was decidedly identical with that of the Almighty, did not authorize itself solely by thus giving to those declarations which express the divine purpose in comprehensive terms, a more determinate bearing on a special object. For some inspired declarations were found which were themselves of special import. They evidently pointed out, by their own terms, with much definiteness, certain distinct parts and special processes in the general scheme which Providence will execute. These appeared as departments or sections, within wider divisions of operation, which are still themselves but parts of the grand scheme; as, for example, the foredoomed destruction of the Popish superstition, though a thing of such magnitude, is only a portion of the divine plan for the destruction of superstition in general, which is yet but a part of the entire scheme announced for accomplishment. The devout men who have sought their incite-

ment and their strength in the decrees of heaven, have often believed that they saw, in some of these more defined and special portions, in these comparatively distinct representations of movements which are to fulfil on earth the purposes of heaven, the very image of such designs as the genius of their zeal was shaping forth. It was quite certain at least that those appointed operations must at any rate involve such as they were projecting; and the predicted success of the whole must be the success of the included parts. But, they said again, there are predestined *agents*; and who still so likely as men who shall be ready with their life and their death for precisely that service? The inference was not far off;—These very plans and proceedings of ours are decreed, as portions of the sovereign scheme; we and our work are a part of eternal destiny.

By this short process, through a general confidence of some predestinated appointment into a determination to one special service, we may believe that some of the distinguished actors in a good cause have gone into their career. At the same time it is to be acknowledged, as probable in respect to others of them, and possibly the greater number, that they have had no process to pass through, no need to verify their commission by speculative inferences from the general designs of the Almighty, no waiting and deliberating to know their destined vocation. It came on them by the immediate force of circumstances and events, that provoked them to action. Their attention was seized, and their ardour excited, at the sight of some one great evil to be combated, or good to be achieved; and that ardour itself, combining with their predestinarian faith, created the assurance of their destination. This is the

very thing, they said, which we came into the world for ; and this, unless accomplished sooner, we must prosecute till we go out of it.

We are not here called upon to suggest the cautions against the possible excesses and dangers of this confident assurance in good men that their designs are *specifically* identical with the divine purposes. Our object was to show, that the consideration of sovereign decrees, which cold unwilling minds are so ready to allege for their inertness, and which is so commonly asserted to have necessarily that consequence, may, on the contrary, become one of the mightiest forces for action. It is this that can make, but under a far nobler modification, the man that the poets have delighted to feign, who would maintain his purpose though the world fell in ruins around him. A missionary against the paganism of the Hindoos may feel an animation specially appropriate to the service, in this assurance that his intention is the intention of God. Those people fortify themselves in the notion, or the pretence, that they are immediately actuated by some deity, and therefore fulfilling, under a law of necessity, his determinations : the missionary will feel peculiar invigoration in advancing to the assault of a superstition with such a principle in its front, in the force of a principle analogous in form, but of heavenly essence. While they will have it, that he may as well spare the efforts on *them* which it were his more proper business to level at the gods, if he could reach them, the energy of his soul will reply, that he accepts the challenge so made for those enthroned abominations, for that he verily believes himself and his confraternity to be an *Avatar* for their destruction.

We have dwelt too long on this topic of religious fatalism, a term we have employed to signify a perverted application, in reasoning and feeling, of the doctrine which acknowledges God's sovereign and unalterable predestination of events. Our excuse must be, that these reasonings and feelings are peculiarly apt to suggest themselves in contravention to such claims as those we are at present wishing to exhibit. And besides their own direct force, they lend strength to other objections and repugnant feelings not arising from so speculative a source. The meanest of the passions, that can make an opposition to a worthy project, or withhold from it the necessary aid, are very ready to find an excuse, a justification, or even a merit, in a pretended waiting submission to the decrees of heaven.

Many causes of a nature not implicated with these obscure speculations, are operating to prevent or lessen the assistance to such an enterprise. We may briefly notice one or two.

If we just name Party-spirit, it is not in order to indulge in any accusatory complaints that our particular undertaking has materially suffered by it.* Doubtless we may be somewhat the worse for it; but we have as little the inclination as the means for calculating how much. And even were a calculation made and verified of that proportion of pecuniary and other modes of aid which a perfect christian liberality would have awarded to this project, and which party-spirit

* The Baptist Mission; of which the primary establishment, at the beginning of 1800, was fixed in the small Danish settlement of Serampore, in consequence of the menacing indications that the British Government would not tolerate, within their own dominions, an attempt to introduce Christianity among the pagans.

may have withheld from it, we should still please ourselves with the persuasion, that the greater part of what may have been so averted has probably been devoted to other excellent designs to which we wish all possible success. The history of this portion of the general christian operations of the age, will have little to say of convoys intercepted by selfish allies. We are too confident of the prolonged favour of Providence on our work, and too much pleased at seeing that Providence favouring the exertions of the same tendency made by other sects of the great christian community, to regret not having obtained any one particle of the means which have availed to good in their hands. And we think we have too systematically avoided giving any just cause of jealous reaction to our friends of the other denominations, to be debarred in modesty from denouncing, with unrestrained censure, the spirit which cannot see the merit of a noble object when there is some point of controversy with its promoters, and which would almost rather wish it might be lost than aid *them* to attain it: a spirit which, in promoting an interest professedly as wide as the world, as liberal as the sun, would enviously account success, or the means of success, conferred on a different class of labourers in the same general cause, so much unjustly subtracted from our own connexion and project; and would avenge on the grand catholic object the petty offences of party or affronts to individual vanity.

If the christian communities, most liable to feelings of competition, were asked in what character they conceive themselves to stand the most prominently forward before the world, as practically verifying the exalted, beneficent, expansive spirit of their religion, it is not improbable they would say, it is as conspirers to extend

heavenly light and liberty over the heathen world. But if so, how justly we may urge it upon them to beware of degrading this the most magnificent form in which their profession is displayed, by associating with it littleness which may make it almost ridiculous. Surely, in thus going forth against the powers of darkness, they would not be found stickling and stipulating that the grand banner of the cause should be surmounted with some petty label of a particular denomination. Such mortals, had they been in the emigration from Egypt, would have been incessantly and jealously busy about the relative proximities of the tribes to the position of the cloudy pillar. A shrewd irreligious looker-on, who can divert himself at the expense of all our sects, and despises this their common object, might indulge his malicious humour, in saying, All this bustling activity of consultation, and oratory, and subscription, and travelling, is to go to the account, as you will have it, of a fervent zeal for christianity: what a large share of this costly trouble I should nevertheless be sure to save you, if I could just apply a quencher to so much of this pious heat as consists of sectarian ambition and rivalry.

We cannot too strongly insist again, that a sense of dignity should spurn these inglorious competitions from the sections of the advanced camp against the grand enemy. Here, at all events, the parties should acknowledge the Truce of God. If they have, and must have, jealousies too sacred to be extinguished, let their indulgence be reserved for occasions and scenes in which they are not assuming the lofty attitude of a war against the gods. But the great matter, after all, is to be solemnly intent on the object itself, on the good to be done, compared with which, the denomination of the instrument

will appear a circumstance vastly trivial. Let all the promoters of these good works be in this state of mind, and then the modes in which the evil spirit in question might display itself will be things only to be figured in the imagination, or sought as facts in the history of former and worse times. For then we shall never actually see a disposition to discountenance a design on account of its originating with an alien sect, rather than to favour it for its intrinsic excellence; nor an eager insisting on points of precedence; nor a systematic practice of representing the operations of our own sect at their highest amount of ability and effect, and those of another at their lowest; nor the studied silence of vexed jealousy, which is thinking all the while of what it cannot endure to name; nor that laboured exaggeration of our magnitude and achievements which most plainly tells *what* that jealousy is thinking of; nor that manner of hearing of marked and opportune advantages occurring to undertakings of another sect which betrays that a story of disasters would have been fully as welcome; nor underhand contrivances for assuming the envied merit of something which another sect has accomplished and never boasted of; nor excitements to exertion expressly on the ground of invidious rivalry, rather than christian emulation; nor casual defects of courtesy interpreted wilfully into intentional hostility, just to give a colour of justice to actual hostility on our part, for which we were prepared, and but watching for a pretext; nor management and misrepresentation to trepan to our party auxiliary means which might have been intended for theirs.

While we would earnestly admonish all the promoters of our object to display an example in every

point the reverse of such tempers and expedients, we will assure ourselves of the favourable dispositions of christians in general toward a design which has its own sphere of operations, in which it has both the happiness and the merit of interfering with no other. It has not, by either interference or ostentation, given any provocation to party jealousy; and we may add, that we trust it is grown to a strength and an establishment beyond the power of that unfriendly spirit, were it excited, greatly to injure.

When we mention the Love of Money, as another chief prevention of the required assistance to such a cause, we may seem to be naming a thing not more specifically adverse to this than to any and every other beneficent design. A second thought, however, may suggest to you a certain peculiarity of circumstance in the resistance of this bad passion to the claims of a scheme for converting heathens. By eminence among the vices which may prevail where the true God is not unknown, this of covetousness is denominated in the word of that God, Idolatry. Now as it is peculiarly against idolatry that the design in question is aimed, the repugnance shown to it by covetousness may be considered as somewhat on the principle of an identity of nature with its enemy. One idolater seems to take up the interest of all idolaters, as if desirous to profit by the warning, that if Satan be divided against himself his kingdom cannot stand.

Or rather it is instinctively that this community of interest is maintained, and without being fully aware; for the unhappy mortal, while reading or hearing how millions of people adore shapes of clay, or wood, or stone, or silver, or gold, shall express his wonder how

rational creatures can be so besotted; shall raise his eyes to heaven in astonishment that the Almighty should permit such alienation of understanding, such dominion of the wicked Spirit: and there is no voice to speak in alarm to his conscience, Thou art the man!

As this unhappy man may very possibly be a frequenter of our religious assemblies, and even a pretender to personal religion, he is solicited, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bring forth something from his store in aid of the good cause. He refuses perhaps; or, much more probably, just saves the appearance and irksomeness of formally doing that, by contributing what is immeasurably below all fair proportion to his means; what is in such disproportion to them that a general standard taken from it would reduce the contributions of very many other persons to the smallest denomination of our money, and would very shortly break up the mechanism of human operation for prosecuting a generous design, throwing it directly on Providence and miracle, with a benediction perhaps uttered by this man, (for he will be as liberal of cant as parsimonious of gold,) on the all-sufficiency of that last resource: Yes, God shall have the glory of the salvation of the heathens, while he is happy to have secured the more important point—the saving of his money.

How much it were to be wished, that the fatuity which this vice inflicts on the faculty which should judge it, (herein bearing one of the most striking characteristics of idolatry,) did not disable the man to take an honest account of the manner in which it has its strong hold on his mind. If, when his eyes and thoughts are fixed on this pelf, regarded as brought into the question of going to promote the worship of God over the earth, or staying to be itself worshipped,

he could clearly feel that he detains it from fervent affection to it as an absolute good, he would be smitten with horror to find his soul making such an object its supreme good—for supreme it plainly is when thus preferred to the cause of God, and therefore to God himself.

But perhaps he thinks his motive regards the prospects of his family. Perhaps he has a favourite or an only son, for whom he destines, with the rest of his treasure, that portion which God is demanding. In due time that son will be put in possession by his father's death, and will be so much the richer for that portion. That this wealth will remain long in his hands, a prosperous and undiminished possession, may not seem very probable when we recollect what has been seen of the heirs of misers. But let us suppose that it will, and suppose, too, that this son will be a man of sensibility and deep reflection. Then, his property will often remind him of his departed father. And with what emotions? This, he will say to himself, was my father's god. He did, indeed, think much of me, and of securing for me an advantageous condition in life; and I ought not to be ungrateful for his cares. He professed also not to be unconcerned for the interests of his own soul, and the cause of the Saviour of the world. But alas! it presses on me with irresistible evidence, that the love of money had a power in his heart predominant over all other interests. It cannot be effaced from my memory that I have often observed the strong marks of repugnance and impatience, an ingenuity of evasion, an acuteness to discover or invent objections to the matter proposed to him, however high its claims, if those claims sought to touch his money, which he contemplated, and guarded, and

augmented, with a devotedness of soul quite religious. But whither can a soul be gone that had such a religion? Would he that acquired, and guarded even against the demands of God, these possessions for me, and who is thinking of them now as certainly as I am thinking of them, oh would he, if he could speak to me while I am pleasing myself that they are mine, tell me that they are the price of my father's soul?

If the rich man in either of the parables which exhibit the curse of wealth without benevolence, (parables being for a moment taken as literal facts,) *might* have been permitted, as one of them petitioned, to send a message to his relations on earth, what might we imagine as the first thing which the anguish of his spirit would have uttered in such a message? Would it not have been an emphatic expression of the suffering which the wealth he had at once adored and abused inflicted on him now, as if it ministered incessant fuel to those fires? Would he not have breathed out an earnest entreaty that it might not remain in that entireness in which it has been his idol; as if an alleviation might in some way arise from its being in any other state and use than that in which he had sacrificed his soul to it? Send away some of that accumulation; give some of it to the cause of God, if he will accept what has been made an abomination by being put in his stead. Send some of it away, if it be but in pity to him of whom you surely cannot help sometimes thinking while you are enjoying it. Can you, in the pleasures and the pride which that wealth may impart, escape the bitter thought, that for every gratification which it administers to you, it inflicts a pang on him by whose death it has become yours, and by whose perdition it is so much?

How different the reflections of those inheritors, who feel in what they do *not* possess a delightful recognition of the character of their departed relations; who feel that they possess so much the less than they *might* have done, because those relations have alienated to them nothing of what was sacred to God, and to charity; and who can comprehend and approve the principle of that calculation of their pious predecessors, which accounted it even one of the best provisions for their heirs to dedicate a portion of their property to God. How different therefore the feelings of a descendant of such a person as that late most excellent christian and philanthropist of your city, whose name the present topic has probably recalled to the minds of most in this assembly.*

We cannot be unaware how many wellwishers to our cause must feel a severe limitation put on their means of aiding it by the pressure of the public burdens, those burdens which oppress the energy and the resources of every scheme for doing good. How often does the thought of such designs present itself to a benevolent man, at the moment of his being accosted with the peremptory demands on the public account, and make him look wishfully and regretfully at the sums he is thus surrendering, to be speedily followed, he knows, by more sums surrendered, from the profits of his laborious industry, or the produce of his little property. How many implements for the holy war, he says to himself, how many bibles, or tracts, or school-manuals, in the languages of Asia, might have sprung from even my share of this forced sacrifice; but this all-consuming monster, denominated the State, seems to know instinctively whatever good men are devising

* Reynolds.

of gratuitous service to the welfare of their fellow-creatures, and to delight in frustrating their designs, by making spoil of their means,—as if in revenge that they should seem to reproach the national power by presuming to apply their little individual means to worthier purposes than those on which the grand public resources have been expended without limit.

We cannot make the odious vision pass away from our view. A great christian state, with every conceivable mode of beneficence offered to its sight and within its powers, has throughout half an age been stimulated to almost miraculous exertions, to an expenditure surpassing all the dreams of the golden empires of romance, a consumption of forces and of materials which might seem to have been adequate, under some imaginable forms of application, to give a new character to the moral world ; and when, after all this, the christian philanthropist looks to see the condition in which this triumph of its astonishing capabilities has left it, he finds that, excepting some hopeful commencements, made quite apart from the public system, and in spite of its insatiable requisitions, that which *was* to be done remains still to be done, with a frightful addition of evils to the account ; and to be done by the efforts of individuals, and those individuals suffering, from the course of national affairs, a lamentable diminution and alienation of their means.

In any large assembly, nevertheless, there may be a number of persons who rather approved than condemned, while it continued, that headlong, rampant, and devastating career, of which they would plead the now oppressive consequences in excuse for contributing but slightly in aid of a concern like that under our contemplation. Without making it our business to arraign

them for such approval, we may suggest that they should be discreet in using this plea. They should think again before consequences which, as resulting naturally from a certain order of public measures, they were required in reason to foresee, at least to a considerable extent, when they deliberately gave their approbation to those measures, shall be alleged by them in exemption from assisting a better cause than any that has absorbed their subsidies. If they have been the professed servants of that Prince of Peace whose kingdom is not of this world, but nevertheless demands tribute from the worldly resources of its subjects, it must have been their acknowledged primary obligation to look to the advancement of that kingdom; in practical conformity with that prayer, of which the very first petition is in this reference—unless they could think it enough to *say* that prayer. This sacred obligation they had to keep in memory, while considering what other expenditures of their property they should take the responsibility of approving: the responsibility, we say; for to abet and sanction a proceeding is to incur the accountableness as completely as if the manifestation of an opposite opinion would *prevent* that proceeding; and it were an idle evasion to plead that the course of measures in question would have been pursued, all the same, though disapprobation instead of coincidence had been avowed by these individuals. With this obligation resting on memory and on conscience, they could not, one should think, without alarm for their christian principles, give their sanction to what must inevitably create speedy and large demands on their property, unless they had very solid ground for assurance of being left still competent to meet the claims peculiarly authoritative on them as

christians. They had to consider then what, in sober calculation, it was probable or possible there should at length be spared to them, by the voracity of such a gulf as they saw swallowing up, year after year, the means of the community. We will presume that they *did*, as a matter of conscience, seriously consider this question, and that through the progressive stages of experience they were still satisfied, as remaining constant in the assurance that their approval of the policy which caused such a tremendous consumption, did not involve their consent to an alienation from the cause of Christ of any thing honestly belonging to it. But then we must tell them, that they will now come with a bad grace to say they have been deceived, and that the cause of Christ must pay the forfeit of their miscalculation. Surely against the claims of a service to which their best strength was put under the prior and paramount obligation acknowledged by their profession, they will hesitate to plead that they have been lamed in their willing adherence to another, of such widely different character.

To those who are not liable to this sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, while deploring the disability inflicted by the consequences of national conduct, it may be suggested as at once a consolation and incitement, that the most unequivocal omen of an amendment of the national condition, even in a temporal respect, is the very circumstance of this recently arisen zeal and activity, in missionary and so many other ways of operation, for extending the prevalence of the true religion in the world. From what has been seen thus far we may affirm, that the Almighty has indicated this as the part of the world whence he is determined to draw, in the outset at least, the chief human means of accomplishing

his most glorious designs for its many nations; that here he has his mines, and his assembling camp; that here is the part where lie the sinews of the sacred war.* But if so, and if that war is to be on so great a scale as appears to be prefigured in the visions of his prophets, may we not venture to say that he will, that he must, protect the stores applicable to his approaching campaigns, from the renewal of such dreadful depredations as we have witnessed, and from the unmitigated continuance of such as are suffered now? We may assure ourselves that he will in due time warn off the sacrilegious hands of the plunderer. And what a glorious change of the national condition, when God shall, as it were, place his angel between what shall remain after all the ravage of ambition, war and corruption, and the re-approach of these spoilers. And how gratifying to behold too, in the contrasted operations, the different rate of cost in proportion to the respective results; to see that, whereas an astonishing and unparalleled expenditure in the vulgar kind of war has resulted in—leaving men, relatively to the objects of that war, not far from where they were, the grand spiritual power, which we behold entering into action, will require an incalculably less amount of material means for its consumption in the whole extent of its operations to transform the moral world.

You will not, my brethren, feel it a damp on the pleasure of anticipating the gradual retreat of the spoiler, that the temporal means so rescued will still not be held in entire and absolute property by their possessors, but will still be in part under a foreign and authoritative

* Our American brethren have given worthy pledges of a willingness to make themselves tributaries to the same imperial cause.

claim. For, besides that it is pleasing to devout minds to hold and regard all things as belonging to God, and as to subserve whatever purpose he pleases, they may be very confident that he will make it to be the better for the community itself, in a temporal respect, whenever there shall prevail in it a disposition to apply its means to promote his cause. Indeed this very spirit will involve a principle of counteraction to all such things as we have seen most miserably destroying the temporal welfare of the nation.

For the present, while many friends of religion are labouring under the grievous pressure, we may suggest it to them as a consideration not unfit to accompany the exercise of their prudence, that the offerings to God from what calamity has left have a peculiar value in his esteem, and in the feelings of the sufferer may contribute to exalt adversity into piety. Should we go back in thought to that period of the world when sacrifices, literally, were appointed for the expression of homage to Heaven, we might imagine the case of a devout man whose harvests, or plantations, or flocks, had for the greater part perished by some destructive visitation, as by tempests, or fire, or locusts, or disease. Let us suppose him, nevertheless, in looking pensively over the desolation, to consider whether yet some small portion of the remainder might not be spared for God, as a token of humble resignation to him that gave and had taken away. Would not that probably be the most acceptable sacrifice that had ever burnt on his altar, and offered with the most affecting emotions of religion? Nor would it seem to him to lessen what was already so little, but rather to augment it in value by bringing a divine benediction upon it. Or suppose a pious man, in that ancient time, to have been cast, by

shipwreck, alone, on a desert coast. If his religion, predominant in all scenes and over all feelings, inspired the wish to make a burnt-offering to his God, his only means might have been something of the little store he had saved from the wreck, and fragments of his ship for fuel. But in the solemnity of bearing toward heaven the expression of a sublime devotion, this would surpass all other sacrificial flames he had ever kindled or beheld. It might appear to his faith, amidst the gloom of the solitary shore, as a symbol of that presence which was in the fire that Moses saw in the desert.

Perhaps it may be justly thought, that the notions, dispositions, and circumstances, above recounted as adverse to the spirit for christianizing the heathens, and as intercepting the desired assistance to a mission actually at work among them, did not require to be commented on at such length. We gladly leave them to become harmless under the progressive ascendency of unfettered thinking, experience, benevolent zeal, and that better aspect which we hope that a good Providence will ere long give to the times, if it were only for the purpose of replenishing the resources of schemes for extending the dominion of divine truth. We shall hasten toward a conclusion by briefly suggesting a few ideas tending to animate the piety of persons already inclined in this way to "come to the help of the Lord."

And surely there is something very captivating in such an expression itself, combined with numerous sentences in the Bible, less bold and striking in phrase, but of the same spirit. It is strange that we are not oftener surprised and delighted at the condescension shewn by the Almighty, in expressing the dictates of his will to his servants in terms and images which

permit them to regard the performance of their duty, their mere duty, in the light of cooperation with him. The thought of being authorized by him to entertain so sublime an idea of their vocation, might bear them up in their deepest distresses and most arduous labours; might animate them though a world were against them. So ennobled a character of their service, however, which it would have been profaneness for them to have arrogated without such a sanction, is fit to be dwelt upon in its full magnitude only when their minds are the most elevated in devotion, when consequently their humility is the most profound. In the usual tenour of their religious feelings, it should be honour enough to inspire complacency and activity in their work, that they can regard themselves in the humbler capacity of mere instruments; that the Supreme Agent chooses to effect by means of them what he could accomplish with infinite facility without them.

Apply the consideration to the matter now before us. He could by a simple act of his will cause an instantaneous disappearance from the globe of that enormous system of mythological delusion, with all its rites, iniquities, and guardian evil spirits. It might vanish like a vapour of the morning, and leave but its wreck and monument in fallen temples and shivered idols, thenceforth a harmless mass of matter, dispossessed of that property which had breathed poison into men's souls. And indeed, if we were regarding the extermination of that monstrous superstition in no other view than that of the advantage of its being the soonest out of existence, we might be tempted to desire so illustrious a catastrophe. If such a thing might be, a servant of God would be willing to forego the honour of his share in the destruction. But when he finds it so

evidently a principle in the beneficent designs of the Divine administration of the world, that they are not directed solely to the accomplishment of one ultimate object, but are intended and adapted to be, in their execution, an employment, a discipline, and an honour, to human agents, he will feel (if his spirit be attempered to the great purposes of his Master) a generous impatience that these agents may be prompt to seize the honour thus brought within their reach. With fire-brands and torches put into their hands, can they be content, he exclaims, to stand still and let them burn out, while the huge fabric inhabited by demon gods, and filled with pestilent abominations, spreads wide and towers aloft in security and defiance before them? Let them advance and prove who has sent them, and whence the fire came that they bear. Let them go and demonstrate upon the proud assemblage of possessors of a region not their own, that the decree of expulsion coming on them at last is not the less armed with authority because He, whose own approach when on earth was always the imperative signal for infernal audacity to retire, seems now only to send his servants to execute his will. That his will should pass into effect through such an agency, may well excite the wonder of those who find such a commission offered to them. It must be the highest distinction which he has to confer on mortals, to be thus, by him, in the sight of far nobler mightier intelligences, ("a spectacle to angels,") accounted worthy to act a part in the grand scheme and process for the enlargement of his kingdom. It will also be a religious triumph as against the principalities and powers of evil, that it should please him to accomplish his victory by the means, in part, of creatures who, in thus serving their God, should be avenging

their race; that these powers should see, that when the irresistible might was at last to be put forth, it was to be through the instrumentality of beings of that order, in whose debasement and misery they had so long maintained a direful evidence on the face of the crea-tion that they were not yet consigned to the rigour of their prison-house.

It is a still further cause of delight, that this putting forth of strength under the external form of weakness, is analogous to the one greatest manifestation of vindi-cating and redeeming energy.

As an incitement to christians to throw a measure of their activity into enterprises aimed at such an object, they may be reminded that, while enjoined to preserve moderation in their own demands upon this earth, they are entitled to be ambitious, shall we not say arrogant, on behalf of their Lord. In their view, the worst usurpation beyond all comparison, in the world, must be that which any where presumes to withhold an in-habited tract from his actual dominion. On whatever it is that does so presume, let them expend the ani-mosity which might otherwise find its meaner exercise against the boundaries that obstruct their own projects of acquisition. And in this nobler direction it will not be the passion which frets itself against what is im-moveable and then subsides or recoils in despair. For they have reason to be assured that those limits against which this more consecrated ambition is impelled in hostility, will at length be carried away. They can descry through the gross darkness that covers the pagan regions, a mystical signature by the finger of God, on every spot, to indicate its assignment by that covenant which has given to the Messiah the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth

for his possession. That declared decree in heaven, that substance of the thing hoped for, is brought down to the earth in the confident anticipations of the faithful, and beheld in foresight as become accomplished in the actual spectacle of an universal kingdom.

They see among leading mortals an ardent competition for dominion over spaces of territory, with angry controversy about titles and usurpations, and an incessant resort to the expedient which wastes the contenders and the subject of contention. They loathe and abhor this spectacle of a world with its unnumbered myriads continually made a sport and a prey of the bad passions of those predominant mortals, by their power of exasperating and directing the bad propensities of subservient multitudes. The contemplators of the scene, if they believed it must be always thus, might well be affected with passionate longings for omens of its approaching dissolution. An oracle that should tell them, in the plainest meaning of the words, that "the end of all things is at hand," might delight them more than ever a pagan mover of an ambitious enterprise was elated by voices or signs from the fane of his deity assuring him of conquest. But they have a better consolation in the faith that amidst all these tumults of conflict, amidst all these destructive competitions of transitory potentates, there is gradually unfolding itself a cause destined to grow to a dominion which will leave no province or tribe of the earth to be contested by the rivalries of an insane ambition.

In the mean time, if they observe any state making a great progress in power and occupancy of the face of the world, it will well become their character to show an animated concern that the kingdom which has their peculiar allegiance may be as evidently advancing, and

that to this progress that enlargement of the temporal dominion may be made in some way to subserve. And here you will all be reminded of the wonderfully rapid extension of the British acquisitions in Asia, where we cannot help interpreting it as a sign in favour of a higher cause, that a lying spirit should have betrayed so many pagan and Mahomedan powers to provoke their own destruction. In this view of such vast conquests, we can thank the contrivers and the heroes, whose contempt would at any stage of the career have been excited at the notion of its being the real cause of their success that they were preparing the way for christianity.

It is of course for men of counsel and of war to scorn this fanatical mode of estimating splendid conquests. But we can see little on any other ground to console good men for the heavy addition made by conquests so splendid, to those public burdens which leave them such scanty means of doing good, of their own choice and in their own manner. Should national glory be talked of, we could have no fear of making the appeal to every one within hearing, whether he, as an individual of the nation, and one of the owners therefore of the glory of these eastern acquisitions, would not most willingly surrender his share of it on the terms of receiving back, were that possible, so much as it may fairly be calculated to have cost him. Especially this would be a safe appeal to a man who is thinking what a valuable contribution that sum would be to projects for diffusing christianity through any par of the world. It has not been left him for such disposal. But still, let him hope in Divine Providence that even to that object it has not been altogether lost. And here is a project which seeks to *redeem* to that very purpose

what has been taken and expended in a spirit infinitely foreign to it, and what, unless so redeemed, may be truly accounted, for the greater portion of it, lost in the most absolute sense. But *this* enterprise, too, is a concern of serious expense. The advocates of this design, have no way of avoiding the confession, that it seeks to impose a little more cost for India on persons to whom that country has, independently of their will, cost too much already; but it is an addition somewhat of the nature of an insurance for christianity on the ultimate effect of the expenditure. It is, like the prophet's action, casting something into the deep to cause that miraculously to float which were else irrecoverably sunk.

The object is, that the true religion may advance—too slowly, at first, it is true, but with a continual movement, to be accelerated in Heaven's good time—on the track of our victorious armies; may plant stations on the fields of their encampments and battles; may demolish, in the moral sense, as many strong-holds of superstition as our artillery has reduced fortresses; may, in short, carry on operations corresponding to the wars in all the points esteemed the most glorious. And what a delightful thing, if thus a Power never thought of by any of the parties in the long conflict, shall come in and take the best of the spoils; and assume, in a better sense, the dominion which so many potentates have been compelled to resign; showing the one people how they had, in truth, been beguiled through expenditure and exertion, for an object for which they would have scorned to make, knowingly, a hundredth part of such a sacrifice; and the other, that they had lost their political independence but as a prelude to their deliverance from their tyrant gods.—But how is

a design which looks to such consequences to be supported in the early stages of its prosecution? It is evident there is no way but that in which the friends of religion may, if they will, decline to afford their aid.

Among the many reasons to be pleaded why they should not so decline, we may suggest the certainty that all the pecuniary aids received by our brethren in India will be faithfully applied, so as to return the best equivalent, in labour and the results of labour, that can be insured by that careful economy of expenditure which has hitherto been one of the most uncontested merits of their proceeding. It is impossible to conceive a stronger pledge for that faithful application, than the fact of their having many years generously devoted the product of that portion of their own indefatigable labours, which they undertook and have prosecuted for the sole purpose of creating their own means for their christian enterprise. *This* warfare therefore, in Hindoostan, is in no danger of incurring a charge which has been constantly and heavily laid on the conduct of our other wars there. We may be assured that all the supplies afforded to *this* service will go into the effective apparatus, and will be felt in the enemy's camp.

While we pay the tribute of our grateful admiration to the devotedness, the disinterestedness, and the most extraordinary performances, of the fraternity at Serampore, we cannot help being reminded that the chief of these labourers are advanced in life, and the leader of the band verging fast, in point of age, to the decline. We will not dwell on the irreparable loss which the cause sustained by them with so noble an energy is one day to suffer. But it does seem highly desirable that the remaining portion of the lives of these veterans

should be turned to the utmost account. A few spirits so long and severely disciplined, who have mastered so much difficulty, that nothing which can remain appears formidable to them, and who habitually, and now as it were mechanically, labour at the extreme pitch of their labouring power, — and that power indefinitely increased by practice,—a few such men, and those also acting in concert, are to be estimated at many-fold their numerical force, even considered in reference simply to the amount of work they can perform. The valuation, therefore, of whatever may remain to them of life is to be according to what these acquired powers and habits have added to the ordinary efficiency of industry and ability. Now, while there is no adding to the *length* of these invaluable lives, it is possible to make, if we may so express it, an addition to their *breadth*. That is, it is possible for these men's minds and their system to be carried, by means of larger supplies, into action on a wider extent. And our argument is, that such ampler supplies during their life would be means put in action, over that extent, not to produce an effect merely according to what may be deemed their ordinary rate of operation, but in proportion to the advantage, which is temporary and may be short, of being employed by such excellently disciplined agents: such enlarged aid would serve the cause in the magnified proportion of these men's peculiar qualification to make them effectual to serve it.

Nor is it any disparagement, by anticipation, to the zeal and talent which we are confident the Supreme Head of the church will appoint in long succession to this work, when we represent the special importance of aiding it in this particular stage, on the ground that a combination of men uniting the advantage of a patri-

archal priority in time, with individual endowments so adapted, such diversified exercise and experience, such difficulty surmounted, and such duration of faithful, firm conjunction, can hardly ever be equalled in the power of making the most efficient application of whatever means shall be supplied.

The right policy, in this case, is the same as that which would impel a State, engaged in some ambitious enterprise, to push its military operations most earnestly, and with every practicable reinforcement, during the last campaign in which those operations could probably have the advantage of being directed by an unbroken band of veterans trained in conjunction to victory in the service.*

* It may not be amiss, with respect to persons but slightly acquainted with the missionary portion of the history of our age, to add a few sentences to the mention, in a preceding note, of the three men who formed themselves into a fraternal union at Serampore, between thirty and forty years since.—The rule of their institution was, that as soon as possible (and it was soon actually attained) they should support themselves, and devote to the christian service all they should gain, beyond what was strictly necessary for that support, by combining with their directly missionary employments certain other occupations, literary and connected with literature, as expedients for raising an income.—Not long afterward there were stationed in the same place and neighbourhood other missionaries of the same religious denomination, in a certain degree associated with them, but not of the union in which these three had voluntarily constituted their own independent system, of deliberations, measures, support in common, and mutual accountableness, exclusively of all other authority.

Within a very few years after the time the references to them were made in this discourse, one excellent member of that union, Ward, was removed by death. The remaining two, one of them now past seventy, and subjected at last to a pressure of bodily infirmity which indicates the approaching conclusion of his labours, the other but few years below that age, both having been remarkably favoured in point of general health during the third part of a century, in a climate so inauspicious to Europeans, have continued to prosecute with unremitting exertion to the present time (1833), with a gradual accession of assistance by the active

And even as regarding these men themselves, willing, like St. Paul, to forego, if it might be put at their

zeal of younger cooperators, the undertaking to which they so long since devoted themselves for life and death. Their missionary operations have been continually extending to a wider compass, though sustained by pecuniary resources far less in proportion than the ordinary cost of similar undertakings. But, their own means for creating those resources having been gradually reduced, by various circumstances in that country, almost to nothing, they have now to depend chiefly on such aid as shall be supplied to them from those in this country who cannot be willing that such workmen should be disabled by any thing but death, or that so important a work should fall to the ground in the presence of the idolaters and their gods.—Through good report and evil report they have proceeded on, actuated by the same invariable determination, to their great object; not surprised that they have had to experience, what must be reckoned on by all who surpass their fellow-mortals, in the service especially of christianity, an ample visitation of malice, misrepresentation, and calumny; partly from the undisguised enemies of religion, and partly from such as claim to be accounted its friends. But they will stand most worthily and eminently conspicuous in christian history, ages after the calumnies and their authors shall have sunk in oblivion.

Mere justice to them requires an observation to be here made, on what was said in the discourse in the way of urging a somewhat extra liberality, on the consideration of the too probably short remainder of the lives of men so peculiarly qualified to apply the contributed assistance to the best advantage. The writer, (or discourser,) never having had the least curiosity to inquire into the official affairs of societies or committees, was really not aware that no part of what was contributed, then or long before, to the general missionary purposes, went in aid of the Serampore fraternity; who sought no such assistance, but, during a very long period, more, probably, than twenty years, supported and extended their system on the sole strength of their own exertions and means; and were disinterested enough to be willing that this fact should be very little known, while their great reputation was availing so powerfully to obtain from public liberality supplies which went to missionary uses entirely distinct from their operations.—In the long course of those operations they have expended, for purely christian and philanthropic purposes, from the proceeds of their own various industry in ways secondary and subsidiary to their extensive gratuitous labours in missionary and bible-translation work, an amount which would have made them all rich; but which, in their honourable poverty, they are rejoicing to have so

choice, a more speedy emancipation from their toils to the final rest, and to labour on to the last period of exhausted nature,—it seems due from our sympathy and gratitude to wish that, if death should not deny them the time, the christian public should not refuse them the other means, for advancing the introductory process of the great work to a point where they would be perfectly willing to bid it adieu. That supposed limit of their christian ambition is not altogether an imaginary one: not a chariot like Elijah's for their departure would inspire in them such joy, in quitting the world, as to know that the most important parts of the revelation of God had been brought to speak in *every* considerable language of Asia.

But at all events, they will depart with the delight of knowing, that their distinguished lot on earth has been to open the way, in an important sense, to the region whither they are going, for innumerable souls escaping from the kingdom of darkness in succession of time to follow them; while they will rejoice to have stayed long enough to see the evinced and completed

expended.—By the loss, in the recent dreadful commercial crash at Calcutta, of what small funds they possessed appropriate to the service, they are at present reduced to a situation of extreme difficulty for the means of continuing the support, on even the most restrictive plan of economy, of the missionaries whom they have placed at no less than *eighteen* different stations on the immense territory under the British government or influence. They have transmitted a plain statement of this situation, with an appeal to the liberality of the friends of religion in this country.

During a very long period they held an ostensible connexion, without dependence or accountableness on their part, with the Baptist Missionary Society, and, when toward the end of that period their resources had become greatly diminished, received pecuniary aid, for a few years, from that Society. But about seven years since the connexion entirely ceased; and from that time all assistance requested for them is expressly in their name as the Serampore Missionaries.

efficacy of their appointment as evangelists in some that are gone before them. They will know that by the cause in which they have lived and laboured, and are dying, a new mode of the divine attention, a greater measure of the divine interest, has been drawn and must remain fixed in benignant radiance on a formerly estranged and desolate tract of the world; inasmuch as wherever there are faithful witnesses to the truth. repenting sinners, and pagans making sacrifices of the idols to which they had offered sacrifice, and commencing in the name of Christ a new life, amidst prayers and praises in languages which never addressed the Almighty before, there is (speaking reverently) something to necessitate toward that spot a far more special emanation of favour and providence from heaven, than when that moral waste contained nothing spiritually related to God. If there were but one particle there of such new and sacred existence, heaven *must* continue in communication with the spot where there is something so much its own, till it became extinct, or were resumed to the sky. How happy then if there shall be there an augmentation, every day, of what thus bears a special relation to God, to become a continually stronger attraction of the divine benignity thitherward; till at length the language of prophecy shall be fulfilled, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

In a confidence of a progressive prevalence of the gracious dispensation of which we think we see the commencement, it might be permitted to indulge for a moment in the contemplation of India as in a future age, in which distant period we can in a measure conceive what will be the reflections of a devout observer,

regarding the scene in reference to the past. With the picture on his imagination of India as the missionaries had found it, and as many preserved authentic descriptions will agree with them in representing it, he may look over the ample region, to wonder what is become of that direful element, which was once perceived pervading and corrupting the whole wide diffusion of mental and moral existence; betraying in a darkness visible the character of the people's souls through their less sable exterior. The dusky visages, the attire and the structure of habitations perhaps, and the grand features of Nature, will be seen the same; but a horrid something, composed of lies, and crimes, and curses, and woes, that did rest in deadly possession over all the land, will be broken up and gone. Where has a place been found for what occupied for ages after ages so many cities, and villages, and houses, and minds? What tempest has driven it away? What presence has been here which *that* presence could not abide? Was it that Spirit in awe of which eternal night vanished at the creation of the world?

He may look from the southern and western shores toward the sublime mountain-boundary of the region on the north, and reflect what a scene it was to confront heaven, in all this breadth, with deities and worships, institutes, dogmas, and licensed morals, hostile and hateful to God; each individual of unnumbered millions being infatuated with notions, and perverted to habits, which exemplified to what depth a rational nature could fall. But how glorious for that reflecting observer to feel it verified to him that this is but a vision of the past, and that, departing like a dream when one awakes, it leaves him in view of a bright and blessed reality. How he will exult in the palpable evidence

that the Son of God has spread his dominion from those shores to those mountains; that the oracles of truth have taken place of the most silly, and loathsome, and monstrous legends with which the father of lies ever made contemptuous sport of the folly of his dupes; and that the new religion admitted in faith as doctrine, has evinced its moral excellence in the virtues of its believers. When joining with them in exercises of worship to the true God, he may have short lapses of mind into a view of the past, presented in vivid images of the fantastic fooleries, and the detestable orgies, that had once elated superstition to madness on the very same spot, as attested by some monumental ruin of a temple; and he will recover from such brief alienation of thought to verify the fact, that he actually *is* among persons reverently calling on God in the name of Christ. That disease of the soul will be gone that exhibits itself in alternate lethargy and raving The charities of humanity, restored among them, will show why it was that their ancestors could look upon, or even cause, the death of relations and friends with stockish indifference? And finally, he will see the effect of that which missionaries are seeking to promote among them, in the manner in which the death of christianized Hindoos will differ from that insensate quiet, that stoicism without magnanimity, with which the pagan Hindoo submits to fate.

And if we might, for a moment, entertain so improbable an idea, as that this observer and comparer should be uninformed of the general course of means and operation, through which the Almighty Spirit had accomplished this great change, we can suppose his conjectures on the subject to be much too magnificent. How came thousands of temples to be surrendered to

the decay of time or the shorter work of dilapidation, an infinity of idols to be demolished, a mythology and ritual, involving the whole life and being of the human multitude, to be exploded, the powers of Brahmins and priests to be annihilated, a whole intellectual and moral system to be supplanted by its opposite? Might not such questions put his mind on the effort to imagine the most extraordinary modes of divine interposition? He might fancy, perhaps, that some great convulsion of nature had contributed to the overthrow of so many structures forming the glory and the fortresses of superstition; that portentous phenomena, bearing a menacing aspect on the pagan rites, had been displayed in the heavens; or that a new dispensation of miracles, at once verifying the record of the ancient ones and surpassing them in magnificence, had expelled the fabulous monsters of the popular faith, as our Lord sent the demonized herd into the sea, and had brought the truth with the force of irresistible facts. Might there not also have been an eminently peculiar manifestation of providence for the temporal welfare of the converts, marking them out to the gross apprehension of the idolaters as exclusively the favourites of the Power that governs the world? And might he surmise in addition, that the foreign christian state, which had conquered Hindoostan, must have systematically lent, during the acquisition and possession, its whole influence arising from conquest and dominion, to promote christianity by every expedient short of force?

No, he might be told, you see, in this happy transformation, nothing which is to be referred to any such causes. The work began in some of the humblest movements that ever pointed to a great object, movements in which the actors owed in part their tole-

ration to the contempt felt for them by the people they adventured among. A train of ideas had been excited in the minds of some individuals respecting the prophecies relative to the heathen nations. Their conversations about these with their religious friends, had led to meetings, prayers, little arrangements of cooperation, and slender contributions of money. A gradual extension of these measures had resulted in the sending of several zealous men, by means of conveyance marked with the disfavour of the governing authorities, to begin the experiment. It was commenced under appearances very far from resembling Constantine's pretended vision of a cross in the clouds, inscribed as the sign of victory; or from recalling to mind what is said of pagan priests of other ages having been affrighted by a trembling of their fanes, and fearful voices from their recesses announcing the abandonment of the solemn abode by the deities. Had these servants of Christ taken up their design on any condition of the intervention of preternatural omens, or any presumption of a sudden revolutionary efficacy of their humble and ordinary instrumentality, the only dictate of their experience hitherto would have been to lay it down. But, wild as they were accounted, both the promoters in England, and the agents in the East, they had not been such elated visionaries in their expectations as that a less than moderate success thus far should deject them to a surrender of the resolution to persevere, and to enjoin on their successors an interminable perseverance, in the trial of what the Almighty should see fit to accomplish at length by means of the divine revelation sent into every region, a never tired repetition of missionary journeys, addresses, and friendly conferences, with the cooperation of schools and pro-

gressive knowledge, and an infinite diffusion of printed religious instructions; and all recommended by the virtue and unequivocally manifest benevolence of the christian reformers. This system of plain expedients, (it may be supposed to be said to the future wonderer at the transformation,) these operations so little partaking of the marvellous, so little inflamed with fanaticism, went on with a never-ceasing activity, and with continually multiplying means and accession of hands, after those who had commenced them and those who had followed next had sunk, one after another, in the dust. On their tombs, (both those fresh in date and colour and those mouldering with age) their successors devoted themselves to prosecute the same design. Converts from heathenism, in numbers but small for awhile, but each year more, and at length amounting to a decimation, were brought in as captives, but to go out under the oath of hostility against that of which they and their ancestors had been the slaves. The succeeding generation of the christians of the west, were happy to continue from that quarter their alliance and aid in the mighter progress of a cause, which *their* ancestors had set on foot in so diminutive a form, committing in faith and hope its success to God. The influence of that Sovereign Spirit has descended in a progressive increase of efficacy far more than proportioned to the enlargement of the system of means: and *so* it has come to pass, (it might be said to the future admirer,) that you can exult in the disappearance from the world of one mighty power of evil that once stretched the shadow of death over all your regions.

For us, and our period of time, there is not only this one grand domination of moral evil, standing in hideous tyranny over a large portion of our world; in many

forms of more immediate invasion of ourselves, that worst enemy maintains a powerful and dreadful presence. We require to be kept in a habitual and alarming sense of the fact, that the one thing in the creation which surpasses all others as an object for hatred, is here amidst us, and all around, in many diversities of malignant existence; and with all of them it is our vocation to be at enmity and war. It were in vain to seek to escape from the condition of our place in the dominions of God. A mind of wandering and melancholy thought, impatient of the grievous realities of our state, may at some moments almost breathe the wish that we had been a different order of beings, in another dwelling-place than this, and appointed on a different service to the Almighty. In vain! Here still we are, to pass the first part of our existence in a world where it is impossible to be at peace, because there has come into it a mortal enemy to all that live in it. Darkness and silence over the universe deny us all knowledge of the inhabitants of its innumerable worlds; but we would willingly believe that this may be the only region (except that of penal justice) where the cause of evil is permitted to maintain a contest. Here perhaps may be almost its last encampment, where its prolonged power of hostility may be suffered in order to give a protracted display of the manner of its appointed destruction. Here our lot is cast, on a ground so awfully preoccupied; a calamitous distinction! but yet a sublime one, if thus we may render to the Eternal King a service of a more arduous kind than it is possible to the inhabitants of any other world than this to render him; and if thus we may be trained, through devotion and conformity to the Celestial Chief in this warfare, to the final attainment of what

he has promised, in so many illustrious forms, to him that overcometh. We shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against our God. But we shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from battle, or be denied to mingle in the eternal joys and triumphs of the conquerors.

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